

Anthropology 310: Fieldwork in Ethnography

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Semester: Fall 2001 (August 30 – December 15th)
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[A]ll research is a practical activity requiring the exercise of judgment in context; it is not a matter of simply following methodological rules.

– Hammersley and Atkinson

We have the moral and theoretical responsibility to employ the time for reflection allowed by our relatively privileged status to address people's real problems.

– Leith Mullings

Course description

This is a methods course. We will learn how to conduct an ethnographic research project. Although there have been numerous critiques of ethnography from every imaginable theoretical perspective, in this course we will not engage significantly with any of those debates. Students should think of this as an *introductory* course. No single methods course will encompass all there is to know about ethnographic fieldwork. You will learn what options are available to you and how to think about putting them together in a research project.

Instructor's approach to the course

First, our methodologies are always works in progress needing tailoring to our particular research settings. There is no single approach that will work in all cases. Second, we must conduct research that matters outside of the academy. Embedded in our methodological discussions will be a theoretical and practical discussion about how to use our "relatively privileged status" as academics to serve the people who share their thoughts, lives, homes, and communities with us.

Course requirements

- designing an ethnographic research project
- conducting preliminary research in Philadelphia
- beginning preliminary data analysis
- writing a research proposal based on the perspective gained from the above

There are no pre-requisites and non-majors are welcome.

Field Sites

You'll have the choice to begin work either with an organization you have some affinity for or history with, or you can pick from a list that I will have arranged. You'll need to spend 5-6 hours per week in the field. Because you probably have lives and jobs outside our class, please see me if the time commitment is too much and we will work something out.

Projects

Specific instructions will be distributed for each of the course projects. A brief description of the projects follows. Projects will include keeping a field journal, leading one class discussion on the readings for that day, one short review essay (2-4 pages) that will involve analyzing an ethnographic text for its methodology, and producing a research proposal based on your preliminary fieldwork. All of your work will implicitly or explicitly engage the ethnographic theories we have discussed. Your **journal** will be a collection of thought - maybe not thought but your written reflections on both the readings and your experiences at your field site. Ideally, these will not (only) be disconnected ramblings, but will be an attempt to make sense of theory in light of experience (and vice versa). Further, the thoughts collected in your journal will serve as the basis for class discussions and will help you generate ideas for your essays. You may also find this journal useful for leading your **class discussion**. The discussant for each topic should prepare a one-page summary of themes, issues, and topics raised in the reading for the week they have chosen. You will need to distribute copies of this summary for each of the class participants (You may use this listserv to do so, but the summary should be posted no later than midnight on the Wednesday prior to class). Additionally, you will need to outline the points in your summary in a brief oral presentation and engage the class in discussion for about 20 minutes. The short essay will require you to write a **critical review** of an ethnography chosen from a list I will provide. These reviews should not summarize the ethnography, but rather critically engage the methodological choices made by the author and discuss other possible methodological strategies. The **research proposal** will be based on an actual request for proposals (RFP) for research funding and will utilize the preliminary fieldwork you will each have conducted for this class. Several assignments will lead up to the research proposal, including designing a survey, constructing interview protocols for structured interviews and life history interviews and creating a consensus modeling exercise. Students will be required to present the research proposal at the final class meeting.

I will provide examples of field journals, presentation summaries, critical reviews, and research proposals.

Class discussion

You will each be expected to participate in leading a class discussion for two class meetings, perhaps with another student. A sign-up sheet for class discussions will be available at the first class meeting.

The focus and direction of the discussion should reflect your own sense of what is important and worthwhile for the set of readings chosen. You should consider all of the

readings for the class session on which you are presenting. You may want to meet with me no later than five days before the class session, to talk about some general issues that might be covered in the discussion.

Papers

There are several guidelines for papers. All papers should attempt to integrate field experience, readings, films, speakers, and class discussions. All papers must be typed, double-spaced, with approximately one-inch margins. Use 10-12 pt. fonts. Insert page numbers. Please don't turn in anemic printouts. Forget about fancy covers. A single paper cover sheet with the title, your name, student ID number, and the date will do. Before turning your paper in, have a kind and generous friend read it. Run spell check. Come see me. And use the Writing Center. Their service is free and the staff is very helpful.

Readings

All assigned readings must be completed by the time class begins. I recommend that you take notes while reading and incorporate these notes into your journal. You might try copying a quote (cite the text and page) or writing out a question you want to raise. You might also come to class with something that happened to you that relates to the reading – a conversation you had, an article you read, a movie you saw. We each bring a unique set of experiences to the class, and part of what makes an intellectually charged conversation about the texts we'll read is the ideas we bring with us. And, as if the idea of an "intellectually charged conversation" weren't enough, I may ask you to write at the beginning of class about the reading or call on you to answer questions from the reading.

Any semester length approach to fieldwork techniques is bound to be partial. Students should consider that the readings are intended to introduce them to some of the important debates regarding ethnography and ethnographic methodologies and to stimulate discussion. They are by no means intended to draw the boundaries of a body of literature. We are going to focus on some recent critiques of ethnography and on some of the main ethnographic techniques currently in use. If students are interested, I am willing to provide appropriate bibliographic materials for further reading on ethnographic theory and methodology.

Course materials

Although tape recorders are not required for the class, they (and a supply of tapes and batteries) are highly recommended. Likewise, you should plan on going through several notebooks.

Class Listserv

I use a listserv for announcements and for distribution of class materials. I will sign each of you up. We can also use the listserv to augment class discussion. Feel free to post questions, comments, or discussion about the readings or class discussions.

Instructor Availability

I am looking forward to working closely with each of you to develop your projects, to discuss field sites, and on anything else related to the class. Please feel free to call, email,

or come talk with me about any aspect of the class. The class listserv is also a great forum for discussion. Don't hesitate to post discussion, questions, objections, articles, links, rants, manifestoes, jokes, and risotto recipes to the list.

Course Guidelines:

Come to class. We're all responsible for attending class. Not only will you be expected to use information presented in class lectures, activities, presentations, discussions, and films, but your participation grade will suffer if you're not in class. Because of the small number of classes, more than two unexcused absence will result in a loss of two points (out of fifteen) per absence from your participation grade.

Do the assignments. Students are responsible for handing in all work on time. Since the assignments for this class build on one another, it is imperative that you keep up with assignments. Work can *always* be turned in early (and you get better feedback this way). Assignments are due *at the beginning* of the class period. Please don't let this prevent you from attending class. If you come to class empty-handed, at least you don't miss any material.

If you turn work in late, two problems arise: 1) you forfeit the chance to rewrite; and 2) the grade will be dropped 10% for each class period that goes by. If you are having a problem with the assignment, come see me before it's due. By this I mean several days before, not at 2:35 on the day the assignment is due.

About rewrites: you have a week from the date an assignment is handed back to you to do a rewrite. If you improve, you get the better of the two grades. If you don't improve, I still note that you tried when doing grades at the end of the semester.

Academic Honesty

The Academic Honesty policy of the College of Arts and Sciences will be followed. Plagiarism can result in a failing grade for the course. If you use someone else's work – whether the actual words or the ideas – cite the reference. If you have any questions, see the TU policy on Academic Honesty on the web <www.temple.edu> or in the Undergraduate Bulletin.

Grades

Grades for the course will be based on the following:

Class attendance, preparation, and participation	15%
Field journal	15% (5% each collection)
<i>(Evaluation of fieldwork will constitute part of the grade for both attendance and journal)</i>	
Critical review	10%
Class Discussion	10%
Research Proposal	50% (abstract, survey and interview protocols, and CDA)

exercise 5% each,
proposal 30%)

Schedule of Classes, Readings, and Assignments:

* DENOTES FOUND IN READING PACKET

8/30 Class 1: Introduction

Housekeeping

Why ethnography?

Trip to Social Science Research Library/TU Urban Archives

9/6 Class 2: Ethics and Field Relationships

MEET IN WRITING CENTER AT 2:40

2ND Floor, Tuttleman Learning Center

Informed Consent

Tuskegee Video

Engagement/Disengagement

Reciprocity

Researcher roles and partnerships pt. 1

Anderson 127-145 (“An Ethical Issue”); LeCompte and Schensul, Vol. 1, 183-204
 (“Ethical Treatment and Care”)

Anderson 25-34 (“Demands of Daily Living”), 47-57 (“Acquiring Status”), 69-83 (“A
 Key Informant”)

(83 pp.)

9/13 Class 3: Entering the Field/Participant Observation

Loria McIntyre

Anderson 1-24 (“Fieldwork”); Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte, Vol. 2, (“Entering the
 Field,” “Exploratory or Open-Ended Observation,” “In-Depth, Open-Ended
 Interviewing”) 69-148

(103 pp)

9/20 Class 4: Interviews, Pt. 1: Design

Formulating Questions

Gorden 9-45

Semi-structured interviews

Structured – Surveys

Open/closed questions

Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte, Vol. 2, 149-200 (“Semistructured Interviewing,”
 “Ethnographic Surveys”)

(89 pp)

9/27 Class 5: Interviews, Pt. 2: Engagement

DUE: SURVEY AND INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Jen Morgan

Delivering Questions

Communicative Atmosphere

Gorden 47-144

(98 pp)

10/5 Class 6: Choosing and Designing a Project, pt. 1

DUE: JOURNALS COLLECTED

LeCompte and Schensul, Vol. 1, 61-126 (“Overview of Research Design/Choosing and Designing a Research Project”)

Location – What’s the research site? Who’s the community?

Marcus 95-114*, Jones 99-119*

(104 pp.)

10/12 Class 7: Interviews, Pt. 3: Life Histories

DUE: CRITICAL REVIEW

Etter-Lewis 43-56*; Anderson and Jack 11-25*; Ginsburg 623-36*; Schneider 61-74*;
Gorden 145-171

(80 pp.)

10/19 Class 8: Choosing and Designing a Project, pt. 2

DUE: PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

Bill McKinney

Theory, area, and interests

Funding

Agar 82-90* (“Getting Funds”)

Researcher roles and partnerships, pt. 2

LeCompte 1-69* (“Researcher Roles”), Thomas 17-32*

(95 pp.)

10/26 Class 9: Cultural Domain Analysis

DUE: JOURNALS COLLECTED

Borgatti 115-148*

Validity/reliability debates

Wolcott 121-135*; Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte, Vol. 2, 271-290 (“Validity and Reliability in Ethnographic Research”)

(69 pp)

11/1 Class 10: Network analysis

DUE: CULTURAL DOMAIN ANALYSIS EXERCISE

Anderson 35-45; Trotter 1-50*; Schweizer 739-758*

(80 pp)

11/8 Class 11: Collecting Ethnographic Data

EXTRA CREDIT: NETWORK ANALYSIS PROTOCOL DUE

OPTIONAL: RESEARCH PROPOSAL DRAFT DUE

LeCompte and Schensul, Vol. 1, 127-147 (“Collecting Ethnographic Data”); Johnson 13-29*

Choosing methods/Triangulation

Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte Vol. 2, 9-48 (Building Formative Theoretical Models”), 49-68 (“Operationalization”)
(97 pp)

11/15 Class 12: Archival and Geographic Data

OPTIONAL: RESEARCH PROPOSAL DRAFT DUE

Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte, Vol. 2, 201-230 (“Using Archival and Secondary Data”)
(30 pp)

11/22 NO CLASS

11/28-12/4 AAA

11/29 Class 13: Data Analysis, pt. 1

DUE: JOURNALS COLLECTED

Anderson 59-68 (“Identifying Cultural Themes”); 117-125 (“Celebration and Challenge”); LeCompte and Schensul, Vol. 1, 147-160 (“Data Analysis”); Gordon 173-197 (“Recording and Coding Information”)
(58 pp)

12/6 Class 14: Data Analysis, pt. 2: Computer Applications

Pat Hansell

Statistical Analysis

SPSS

Anthropac

NUDIST

Document E-180 “Using the Computer as a Research Tool”
(38 pp.)

12/13 Final Exam Period: Presentation of Proposals

DUE: RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Required Texts

Available at Zavelle=s

Anderson, Barbara Gallatin

1990 *First Fieldwork: The Misadventures of an Anthropologist*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Gordon, Raymond L.

1992 *Basic Interviewing Skills*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Jean J. Schensul

1999 *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research: Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 1*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Schensul, Stephen L., Jean J. Schensul, and Margaret D. LeCompte

1999 *Essential Ethnographic Methods Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 2*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Available in the Student Copy Center, 6th Floor, Conwell Hall

Document E-180 "Using the Computer as a Research Tool"

Reading Packet (Available at Docucare):

Agar, Michael H.

1996 *The Professional Stranger*. San Diego: Academic Press, pp. 73-90.

Jones, Delmos J.

1987 "The 'Community' and Organizations in the Community." In *Cities of the United States: Studies in Urban Anthropology*, Leith Mullings, ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

Marcus, George E.

1995 "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24:95-117.

Schweizer, Thomas

1997 "Embeddedness of Ethnographic Cases: A Social Networks Perspective." *Current Anthropology*. 38(5): 739-760.

LeCompte, Margaret D.

1999 "Researcher Roles." In *Researcher Roles and Research Partnerships: Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 6*, Margaret D. LeCompte, Jean J. Schensul, Margaret R. Weeks, and Merrill Singer, eds. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Thomas, Jim

1993 *Doing Critical Ethnography*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 17-32.

Johnson, Allan G.

1988 *Statistics*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, pp. 13-29.

Wolcott, Harry F.

1983 "Seeking – and Rejecting – Validity in Qualitative Research." In *Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Borgatti, Stephen P.

1999 "Elicitation Techniques for Cultural Domain Analysis." In *Enhanced Ethnographic Methods: Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 3*, Jean J. Schensul, Margaret D. LeCompte, Bonnie K. Nastasi, and Stephen P. Borgatti, eds. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Schneider, William

1992 "Writing Life Histories from the Field." *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 2(1): 61-74.

Anderson, Kathryn and Dana C. Jack

1991 "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses. In *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. Sherna Bergen Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds.

Etter-Lewis, Gwendolyn

1991 "Black Women's Life Stories: Reclaiming Self in Narrative Texts." In *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. Sherna Bergen Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds.

Ginsburg, Faye

1987 "Procreation Stories: Reproduction, Nurture, and Procreation in Life Narratives of Abortion Activists." *American Ethnologist*, 14(4): 623-636.

Trotter, Robert T. II

1999 "Conducting Ethnographic Network Studies." In *Mapping Social Networks, Spatial Data, & Hidden Populations: Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 4*, by Jean J. Schensul, Margaret D. LeCompte, Robert T. Trotter II, Ellen K. Cromley, and Merrill Singer. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Suggested Further Reading

** DENOTES AVAILABLE AT ZAVELLE'S OR B&N – CHECK WITH ROB

Ethnographic Theory

Agar, Michael H.

1996 *The Professional Stranger*. San Diego: Academic Press.

Behar, Ruth and Deborah A. Gordon

1995 *Women Writing Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre

1977 *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1986 “The Forms of Capital.” In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, John Richardson, ed. New York: Greenwood Press.

Clifford, James and George Marcus

1986 *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Comaroff, John L. and Jean Comaroff

1992 *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Paley Stacks GN345.C64 1992

Durkheim, Emile

1966 *Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: The Free Press.

**Dresch, Paul, Wendy James and David Parkin, eds.

2000 *Anthropologists in a Wider World: Essays on Field Research*. New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Paley Stacks GN34.3.F53 A57 2000

Geertz, Clifford

1975 *The Interpretation of Cultures*. London: Hutchinson.

Hammersley, Martyn

1992 *What's Wrong with Ethnography?* London: Routledge.

**Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson

1995 *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. New York: Routledge.

Kuper, Adam

1992 *Conceptualizing Society*. London: Routledge.

Malinowski, Bronislaw

1961 “Introduction.” In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. New York: EP Dutton.

Nash, June

1981 "Ethnographic Aspects of the World Capitalist System." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 10:393-423.

**Willis, Paul.

2000 *The Ethnographic Imagination*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
Paley Stacks GN345 .W52 2000

Wolf, Margery

1992 *A Thrice-told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility*.
Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Paley Stacks GN345.W65 1992

Social Network Analysis:

Degenne, Alain and Michel Forsé ; translated by Arthur Borges

1999 *Introducing social networks*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
Paley Stacks HM741 .D43 1999

Wasserman, Stanley and Katherine Faust

1994 *Social network analysis: methods and applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.
Paley Stacks HM131.W356 1994

Wasserman, Stanley and Joseph Galaskiewicz, editors

1994 *Advances in social network analysis : research in the social and behavioral
sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.
Paley Stacks HM131.A318 1994

Ethics

Asad, Talal, ed.

1973 *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities
Press.

Diamond, Stanley

1974 *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ:
Transaction Publishers.

Hymes, Dell

1969 *Reinventing Anthropology*. New York: Pantheon.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy

1995 "The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology." *Current
Anthropology* 36(3): 409-440.

Research Partnerships/Applied Ethnography/Critical Ethnography

Bennett, John W.

1996 "Applied and Action Anthropology: Ideological and Conceptual Aspects."
Current Anthropology 37(1) Supplement: S23-S53.

Singer, Merrill

1994 "Community-Centered Praxis: Toward an Alternative Non-dominative Applied Anthropology." *Human Organization* 53(4): 336-344.

1995 "Beyond the Ivory Tower: Critical Praxis in Medical Anthropology." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 9(10): 80-106.

Thomas, Jim

1993 *Doing Critical Ethnography*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Van Maanen, John

1988 *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Statistics for Dummies

Johnson, Allan G.

1988 *Statistics*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.