ANTHROPOLOGY 810.21: RESEARCH DESIGN AND ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

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Spring 2011  
W 1:30-4:18  
0060 Science and Engineering Library

Office hours: R 10-1 or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The primary focus of this course is on hands-on student research activities. We focus on a selection of methods that are central to much anthropological fieldwork – participant observation, writing fieldnotes, semi-structured interviews, surveys, freelists, pile-sorts, and rankings. Other techniques and issues will be incorporated as they emerge from the course project. In addition to data-gathering methods, you will also learn and experiment with quantitative and qualitative data analyses. And because methods are meaningless if they are not part of a well thought through research design, you will also learn how to design a research project and write it up in a research proposal.

You will learn to design a study and be trained in different research methods by participating in a collaborative research project. In this collaborative research project we will as a class design a study, collect data, analyze data, and write up the results in a report.

This course will be taught as a seminar. This means that students share responsibility for the success of the course and have to come to class prepared, i.e., having read and reflected on the readings. You also have to bring the readings to class for discussions.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

You will learn how to study human behavior using ethnographic methods through participation in a collaborative research project. You will also learn how to design your own study.
REQUIRED READING

The following books are required reading and available in the OSU Book Store or through online booksellers like Amazon.com. Additional required and recommended readings will be made available through Carmen.

Bernard, H. Russell  

Galman, Sally Campbell  

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw  

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

**Attendance and participation:** You are expected be actively engaged in class; that is, coming to class prepared, paying attention, and contributing to discussions and problem solving, both by making comments and by facilitating other people’s participation. Because it is difficult to do well in the course if sessions are missed *attendance at every class meeting is required*. Late arrival and early departure are considered poor participation; they are disruptive to others and make it likely to miss essential information. Please contact me if there is an emergency situation. If you are ill and must miss a class, you are responsible for getting the notes and assignment information from your classmates.

**Readings:** You are expected to have read the assigned readings once or twice before you come to class. As you read, highlight, take notes, summarize, look up new words or concepts, and come with questions for me and/or your classmates. In short, be prepared to discuss the readings in class and bring the readings to class. I also recommend you to go over the readings once more after class.

**Course project:** You will learn to design a study and train in different research methods by participating in a hands-on collaborative research project. The course project in Spring 2011 will examine students’ use of the recently renovated Thompson Library. Architects and librarians have put much thought into the design of the different study, work and meeting spaces in the new library. However, the way students use, perceive, and even modify spaces in the library may or may not have been planned by the architects and/or librarians. To study students’ use of the library we will use a wide range of different ethnographic methods, including participant observations and semi-structured interviews with students, librarians, and architects. We will write up the results and present them to the director of the OSU libraries.
**Research Proposal:** You will design and write one proposal for your own research project (real or imaginary). The proposal is divided in five parts: introduction, objectives, population and sample, methods, and analysis. Two drafts are due over the course of the quarter (see schedule below). The proposal should follow the guidelines of the NSF Grant Proposal Guide. You will receive detailed instructions on what to cover in each section. The complete research proposal, including an IRB application (for exemption, expedited or full review), is due in finals week. All sections have to be put on your wiki page. I recommend that you continuously revise and update your proposal as you develop your research proposal over the course of the quarter.

**Evaluation:** Course responsibilities will be weighted in the following way:
- Attendance and participation: 15%
- Thompson Library project assignment (9): 45%
- Research Proposal drafts (2): 20%
- Research proposal final version: 20%

**Total:** 100%

Final grades are based on the OSU Standard Scheme. A general guide to how you are doing is: A 93; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 60-66; E< 60.

**Academic Misconduct:** All students should become familiar with the rules governing academic misconduct (e.g., cheating, plagiarism). Ignorance of these rules is not an acceptable defense. Anyone violating said rules will be reported to the Board of Academic Misconduct. If you have any questions, please see me.

**Special notes from the instructor:**
- Only in cases of properly documented illness or personal emergency will late assignments be accepted. Late assignments will progressively lose value and will be evaluated and returned as time allows.
- We use a wiki for the course project (https://anthropology81021.wikidot.com). The secret password is: bieb2010.
- I use Carmen to post information for the class (e.g., syllabus, cancelled office hours, changes in reading assignments). Check it regularly.
SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

- *TL assignment* = Thompson Library assignment
- \(\Delta\) *RP assignment* = Research Proposal assignment

### WEEK 1: ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH
March 30: Introduction to course, project, wiki, citi, and ethics
- *Complete CITI test and bring hard copy of certificate to class*

### WEEK 2: RESEARCH DESIGN
April 6: Research design and research strategies
- *TL assignment due: 1) literature*

### WEEK 3: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION
April 13: Sampling and participant observation
- *TL assignment due: 2) objectives*

### WEEK 4: FIELDNOTES
April 20: How to write fieldnotes
- \(\Delta\) *RP first draft due*
- *TL assignment due: 3) observations*

### WEEK 5: UNSTRUCTURED & SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS
April 27: Unstructured and semi-structured interviews
- *TL assignment due: 4) fieldnotes*

### WEEK 6: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS
May 4: Grounded theory
- *TL assignment due: 5) semi-structured interviews*

### WEEK 7: STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS
May 11: Surveys
- *TL assignment due: 6) qualitative data analysis*

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1 Please note that this is a tentative schedule and that the instructor reserves the right to make changes.
WEEK 8: FORMAL METHODS
May 18: Free-lists, pile Sorts, and rankings
△ RP second draft due
● TL assignment due: 7) structured interviews

WEEK 9: QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS
May 25: Data management and statistical analysis
Read: Bernard (2006:549-648)
● TL assignment due: 8) quantitative data analysis

WEEK 10: WRITING UP RESEARCH
June 1: Writing ethnographically
● TL assignment due: 9) writing

FINALS WEEK
△ Final version of the research proposal is due on Wednesday June 8th before midnight.
REQUIRED READINGS

Agar, Michael
    2006  An Ethnography By Any Other Name ... Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research.

Bernard, H. Russell

Charmaz, Kathy

Cliggett, Lisa

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw

Flinn, Juliana

Galman, Sally Campbell

Henrich, Joseph, Steven J. Heine, and Ara Norenzayan
    2010  Most people are not WEIRD. Nature 466(1 July 2010):29.

Hess JR., G. Alfred

Johnson, Jeffrey C.

Matthews, Sarah H.

O'Reilly, Karen

Ottenberg, Simon

Spradley, James P.

Spradley, James P.

Weller, Susan C., and A. Kimball Romney
RECOMMENDED READINGS

Agar, Michael H.

Angosino, Michael

Barley, Nigel

Crane, Julia G., and Michael V. Angrosino

de Munck, Victor C. & Elisa J. Sobo, ed.

Dewalt, Kathleen M., and Billie R. Dewalt

Emerson, Robert M., ed.

Henrich, Joseph, Steven J. Heine, and Ara Norenzayan

Kearney, Margaret H., et al.

Lareau, Annette

Madrigal, Lorena

McCurdy, D., J. P. Spradley, and D. J. Shandy

McKillup, Steve

Schensul, Jean J., and Margaret D. LeCompte, eds.

Tobin, Joseph, David Wu, and Dana Davidson