

ANT 4495: METHODS IN CULTURAL RESEARCH

FALL 2015

WED 2:00-4:45

SOC 37

USF

Instructor: Dr. Angela Stuesse
Office: SOC 137
Email: astuesse@usf.edu
Office Hours: Wed 11:00-12:30
and by appointment

WELCOME!

This course offers an opportunity for students to learn about the methodologies of ethnographic fieldwork and put these into practice through a semester-long field research project in the Tampa Bay area. Through this project, we explore the theoretical, ethical, and practical promises and challenges of ethnography, from problem definition, research design, and entering the field to data analysis, validity, and "writing up." Along the way we will focus on the collection and analysis of ethnographic data using participant observation, fieldnotes, interviewing, life histories, visual methods, focus groups, archival and ethnographic survey research, and various strategies for organizing and coding data.

Each week's readings will teach us about a new research method, which we will discuss in class and then implement in our projects through weekly structured ethnographic assignments. Class meetings will be used largely as workshops to discuss what we are learning and provide / receive feedback (both instructor and peer-to-peer) on our ongoing projects. Your work over the semester will culminate in an in-class presentation of your ethnographic research, as well as a final ethnographic report.

Success in this course requires your full commitment. In addition to weekly readings and class participation, your ethnographic research project requires you to spend at least 3-4 hours (at a bare minimum) in the field each week conducting your research. You will also spend time "writing up" your research for your weekly ethnographic assignments. It is easy to fall behind in this course. My best advice is to attend all classes and make a habit of submitting all weekly assignments on time.

MCHUMOR by T. McCracken



"I'm getting too old to hunt. Let's contact that professor who wanted to study us and eat the students he sends to do the research."

THE FAR SIDE® BY GARY LARSON



"Anthropologists! Anthropologists!"

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through this class, students will:

- become familiar with ethnographic research design, methods, analysis, and writing.
- understand strengths, limitations, and applications of various qualitative methods.
- have a basic grasp of the ethical and reflexive dimensions of ethnography.
- learn to use article databases and other library resources to conduct a literature review.
- practice being collaborative and collegial with classmates.
- complete a semester-long field research project using ethnographic methods and present this in both oral and written forms.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no assigned textbook for this class. All readings are available on Canvas. You are expected to print them out or access them on a tablet computer, make notes as you read, and bring the relevant readings and your notes to class each week.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Below is the point system I will use for evaluating students' performance:

1. Class Participation	15
2. Peer Evaluation of Group Work	05
3. Ethnographic Assignments for Credit / No Credit (11 @ 2 points each)	22
4. Ethnographic Assignments for a Grade (7 @ 4 points each)	28
5. Presentation of Ethnographic Research	10
6. Final Ethnographic Report	20
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TOTAL POINTS	100

1. Participation

15 points

Your participation at each class meeting is critical for success in this course. I expect you to be active in discussion, participate fully in peer-to-peer learning, help shape the course with your own interests, and to be proactive learners. Please come to class well prepared and ready to engage the material. You are expected to bring relevant questions or challenges from your ongoing field research for discussion and to assist your peers by providing feedback on their research projects. You should also bring your completed ethnographic assignments and copies of the week's readings to class each week and be prepared to discuss both. Participation will be monitored, and regular, engaged and informed participation will figure into my assessment of your performance in the course. Failure to attend will hurt your participation grade.

2. Peer Evaluation of Group Work

5 points

Early in the semester we will form small groups of 3-4 students each, and you will regularly meet with your group in class to discuss your ethnographic research projects and to provide peer-to-peer feedback on each other's work. This small group work is integral to the course, and students must come prepared to share the progress and challenges of their own research as well as to engage with each other's work. Five percent of your grade in this course will be based on your group members' evaluation of your preparedness, participation, and contributions in small group work.

3. Ethnographic Assignments for Credit / No Credit

22 points

Every week you will be given one or more ethnographic assignments to complete and bring to the following class meeting. In some cases (11 assignments) you will receive full credit for completing the assignment, bringing it to class for small group work, and handing it in on time. These assignments are worth 2 points each. Assignments submitted late or in the wrong format will be eligible for partial credit. Detailed instructions for ethnographic assignments will be given out in class each week and posted on Canvas. Assignments marked (C) in the Course Schedule below are for Credit/No Credit.

4. Ethnographic Assignments for a Grade

28 points

Every week you will be given one or more ethnographic assignments to complete and bring to the following class meeting. In some cases (7 assignments) you will need to complete the assignment, bring it to class for small group work, and submit it to the instructor for a grade. These assignments are worth 4 points each. One point will be deducted from any assignment submitted after it is due. Detailed instructions for ethnographic assignments will be given out in class each week. Assignments marked (G) in the course Schedule below are for a grade.

5. Presentation of Ethnographic Research

10 points

The last class meeting and/or the time scheduled for the final exam will be used for students' presentation of their ethnographic research projects. While presentations will be largely oral, students are encouraged to be creative and come up with innovative ways to present their material and engage the audience. Presentations must be prepared and practiced in advance, and be timed to last 10 minutes.

6. Final Ethnographic Report

20 points

An ethnography based on your research is due (in hardcopy) in class on Wednesday, December 2. This will be a 10-page report PLUS additional supplemental material you will have produced over the course of the semester. Detailed instructions will be given in a separate handout. Late papers will be penalized a letter grade (2 points) for each day or portion thereof that passes beyond this deadline.

Letter Grade Assignment

Final letter grades will be assigned according to the following scale, and decimals of .50 or greater will be rounded up.

> 98	A+	88-90	B+	78-80	C+	68-70	D+	<60	F
93-98	A	83-88	B	73-78	C	63-68	D		
90-93	A-	80-83	B-	70-73	C-	60-63	D-		

POLICIES

This syllabus is a preliminary outline for the course and is subject to revision. The current version can always be found on Canvas.

Communication

I will use Canvas (accessible online through my.usf.edu) to organize course materials and communicate with students in this class. You are responsible for learning to use Canvas and monitoring it for updates. The university recommends using Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome browser when using Canvas (do not use Safari or Internet Explorer). If you need help learning

how to perform various tasks related to this course or other courses being offered in Canvas, please consult the Canvas [videos](#) or [help guides](#). You may also contact USF's IT department at 813.974.1222 or help@usf.edu.

Make sure you have a current email address registered with the university to ensure you receive messages, announcements, etc. You will not be excused for missing an assignment or announcement because you did not check Canvas or your USF email.

If you need to contact the Instructor outside of class, you may visit me during office hours or send an email. Emails should always be professional and courteous. If you do not know how to write a professional academic email, please review wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor. I check email daily and will do my best to respond to messages within 24 hours. In the event of an emergency, you should contact the Dean for Students.

Technology in the Classroom

Per university policy and classroom etiquette, mobile phones and other technology must be silenced during all class meetings. Internet browsers may not be open, and using email, instant messaging, social media, texting, etc., is not permitted at any time. Students violating these rules will be asked to no longer bring their technology into the classroom, and may be asked to leave so as to not disrupt the learning environment.

If you choose to do your reading for this course on a screen instead of in hardcopy, you may bring a tablet with readings on it to class. I discourage the use of laptops in the classroom because doing so can distract you, distract me, disturb others, and inhibit participation. If you cannot adapt to a different note-taking strategy and need your laptop, you must seek approval by meeting with me during office hours.

Formatting of Written Work

All written work (with the exception of field jottings) should be typed double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. All pages should be numbered and have the name of the assignment and the student's name in the upper right corner.

References and Citations

You must use the American Anthropological Association style for bibliographies/ references/ works cited, and all references must be complete. Please see the Anthropology Department's citation and reference guidelines on Canvas, or review aaanet.org/publications/style_guide.pdf for more details. All papers must be proofread in their entirety prior to submission.

Plagiarism

I take academic integrity seriously and will not tolerate plagiarism. All written work is expected to be your own and all sources of data or information must be appropriately cited and recognized. USF has an account with Turnitin.com, an automated plagiarism detection service that allows instructors and students to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism. I reserve the right to 1) require that assignments be submitted electronically and 2) electronically submit assignments to Turnitin.com through Canvas. For consequences of plagiarism, see Academic Integrity, below.

Academic Integrity

It is your responsibility to read and understand the university's policy on academic integrity, available online at: ugs.usf.edu/policy/AcademicIntegrityOfStudents.pdf. The instructor's

determination that a violation of the university's academic integrity policies has occurred on any assignment will result in a record of the infraction being placed in your file and receiving a zero on the work in question at a minimum. At the instructor's discretion, you may also receive a failing grade for the course. Confirmation of such incidents can also result in expulsion from USF.

"Incomplete" Grades

An incomplete grade (I) will only be given under very rare circumstances, in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester. To qualify for an incomplete, the student must have completed all but a very small portion of the course, and must have earned a passing grade up to that point. If the student qualifies for an incomplete grade, the student and instructor will sign a contract ensuring the missing work is completed. Students should note that failure to complete any assignment will not be sufficient justification for an incomplete grade in the course.

Disability Access

Any student with a disability is encouraged to meet with the instructor privately during the first week of class to discuss accommodations. Each student must bring a current Memorandum of Accommodations from the Office of Student Disability Services, a requirement for receiving accommodations. Accommodated examinations through the Office of Student Disability Services require two weeks' notice. All course documents are available in alternate format if requested in the student's Memorandum of Accommodations. Please see the Students with Disabilities Services website for more information: sds.usf.edu.

Observance of Religious Holidays

In accordance with the University policy on observance of religious holidays, "no student shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a date or time prohibited by his or her religious beliefs." If a religious holiday coincides with this class, please let the instructor know in writing, no later than the second week of class.



COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: All readings and ethnographic assignments must be completed prior to the class in which they are listed in the syllabus.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTIONS AND ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK

August 26

WEEK 2: PROBLEM DEFINITION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

September 2

Ethnographic Assignment:

Brainstorm for ethnographic research project. (C)

Read:

Spradley 1980. Chapter 3: The Ethnographic Research Cycle. Pp. 26-35.

LeCompte and Schensul 1999. Chapter 5: Choosing and Designing an Ethnographic Research Project. Pp. 97-113.

Booth 2008. Chapter 3: From Topics to Questions. Pp. 35-50; Chapter 4: From Questions to a Problem. Pp. 51-67.

WEEK 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

September 9

This class will include a library training on how to use online databases and RefWorks to conduct a literature review. In advance of our meeting you must create a RefWorks account, if you don't already have one.

Ethnographic Assignment:

Finalize project selection. (C)

Read:

Booth 2008. Chapter 5: From Problems to Sources. Pp. 68-83.

WEEK 4: ENTERING THE FIELD AND ETHICS IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

September 16

Ethnographic Assignment:

Conduct literature review and create annotated bibliography. (G)

Read:

Schensul, et al. 1999. Chapter 4: Entering the Field. Pp. 69-89.

LeCompte and Schensul 1999. Chapter 9: Ethical Treatment of Research Participants and Care for Human Relationships. Pp. 183-204.

WEEK 5: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND FIELDNOTES

September 23

Ethnographic Assignment:

Create verbal script for informed consent. (C)

Meet with and take notes on “key informants.” (G)

Read:

DeWalt and DeWalt 2002. Chapter 1: What is Participant Observation? Pp. 1-15.

DeWalt and DeWalt 2002. Chapter 8: Writing Field Notes. Pp. 141-162.

WEEK 6: INTERVIEWING, PART I

September 30

Ethnographic Assignment:

Make first of weekly field “jottings,” submit images of notebook pages via Canvas. (C)

Write “expanded” field notes based on field jottings. (G)

Read:

DeWalt and DeWalt 2002. Chapter 7: Informal Interviewing in Participant Observation. Pp. 120-125, 135-136. **(Partial chapter)**

Schensul and LeCompte 2012. Chapter 7: Semistructured Interviews and Observations. Pp. 180-183. **(Partial chapter)**

Various Authors 2015. Designing an Interview Guide.

WEEK 7: INTERVIEWING, PART II

October 7

Ethnographic Assignment:

Create interview guide. (G)

Submit images of this week’s field jottings via Canvas. (C)

Read:

DeWalt and DeWalt 2002. Chapter 7: Informal Interviewing in Participant Observation. Pp. 125-140. **(Partial chapter)**

Weiss 1994. Chapter 4: Interviewing. Pp. 61-119.

WEEK 8: LIFE HISTORIES AND VISUAL METHODS

October 14

Ethnographic Assignment:

Upload recording of first interview to Canvas. (C)

Submit images of this week's field jottings via Canvas. (C)

Read:

Angrosino 2007

Thomas 2009

WEEK 9: FOCUS GROUPS

October 21

Ethnographic Assignment:

Transcribe interview section. (G)

Submit images of this week's field jottings via Canvas. (C)

Read:

Agar and MacDonald 1995

Cameron 2000

WEEK 10: ARCHIVAL AND SURVEY DATA

October 28

Ethnographic Assignment:

Evidence of research activity: Submit copy of current field log via Canvas. (C)

Submit images of this week's field jottings via Canvas. (C)

Read:

Schensul, et al. 1999. Chapter 8: Structured Ethnographic Data Collection: Ethnographic Surveys. Pp 165-199; and *part of* Chapter 9: Using Archival and Secondary Data. Pp. 201-214.

WEEK 11: ORGANIZING, CODING, AND ANALYZING DATA

November 4

This class will include a computer lab training on how to use Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software. If you have a laptop computer, you should bring it to class today.

Ethnographic Assignment:

Prepare pilot survey or archival report and submit via Canvas. (G)

Submit images of this week's field jottings via Canvas. (C)

Read:

DeWalt and DeWalt 2002. Chapter 9: Analyzing Field Notes. Pp. 163-194.

WEEK 12: NO CLASS—Veterans' Day

November 11

You are expected to use the extra time this week to tie up all loose ends of your research and complete coding and analysis. Once that's complete, read for week 13 and start outlining your final paper and presentation.

WEEK 13: VALIDITY AND WRITING UP

November 18

Ethnographic Assignment:

Create code list and rationale. (G)

Due via Canvas by 11:59pm on Monday, November 16

Read:

Schensul, et al. 1999. Chapter 11: Validity and Reliability in Ethnographic Research. Pp. 271-290.

Emerson 1995. Chapter 7: Writing Ethnography. Pp.169-210.

WEEK 14: NO CLASS—Happy Thanksgiving!

November 25

WEEK 15: STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

December 2

Final Ethnographic Report Due December 2 in Class!

See handout for detailed requirements.

ENJOY THE BREAK!

COURSE READINGS

- Agar, Michael, and James MacDonald
1995 Focus Groups and Ethnography. *Human Organization* 54(1):78-86.
- Angrosino, Michael
2007 Conducting a Life History Interview. *In Doing Cultural Anthropology: Projects for Ethnographic Data Collection, Second Edition*. M. Angrosino, ed. Pp. 33-44. Long Grove: Waveland Press.
- Booth, Wayne, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams
2008 *The Craft of Research, Third Edition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Cameron, Jenny
2000 Focussing on the Focus Group. *In Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. I. Hay, ed. Pp. 83-102. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- DeWalt, Kathleen, and Billie DeWalt
2002 *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*. Walnut Creek: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw
1995 *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- LeCompte, Margaret D., and Jean J. Schensul
1999 *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*. Walnut Creek: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Schensul, Stephen L., Jean J. Schensul, and Margaret D. LeCompte
1999 *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires*. Walnut Creek: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Schensul, Jean J. and Margaret D. LeCompte
2012 *Essential Ethnographic Methods: A Mixed Methods Approach*. Lanham: AltaMira Press.
- Spradley, James
1980 *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Thomas, Mary E.
2009 Auto-Photography. www.elsevierdirect.com/brochures/hugy/SampleContent/Auto-photography.pdf, accessed 1/7/2011.
- Various Authors
2015 *Designing an Interview Guide. Guidance compiled from online sources by Dr. Stuesse.*
- Weiss, Robert
1994 *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.