

# ANG 5937: ENGAGING ETHNOGRAPHY

FALL 2015

MON 2:00-4:45

SOC 30

USF

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Office Hours: Wed 11:00-12:30  
and by appointment

## WELCOME!

What is engaged ethnography? We often speak of engaged research, but what does it look like on the ground? How is it represented through textual narrative? And what difference does it make in the “real” world? In this seminar we will “engage” these questions through an exploration of ethnographies produced by politically- and community-engaged researchers. We will read approximately one book-length ethnography per week, and all authors will be invited to join us for an informal conversation about their work. With an eye to how methodologies, epistemologies, and the products of research are transformed by various forms of engagement, students will seek to define their own approach to engaged scholarship. The final paper will give you the opportunity to articulate this approach in the form of a position piece or an engaged ethnography based on your own original research.



## COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is a seminar and is structured around student-centered discussion. Let’s work together to create a participatory classroom environment in which we exchange ideas and also listen to and respect different perspectives. For this format to work we’ll all have to make a commitment to come to class prepared—having read the week’s assignments and with questions, reactions, and ideas to contribute.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

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

1. Participation	20
2. Thought Pieces (8 x 5 points)	40
3. Book Review	10
4. Presentation of Book Review	05
5. Final Paper	20
6. Presentation of Final Reflections	05
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TOTAL POINTS	100

### 1. Participation

**20 points**

To do well in this seminar you must come to class regularly and participate fully. I expect you to be active in discussion, to help shape the course with your own interests, and to be proactive learners. You should bring assigned readings to class (in hardcopy or on a tablet computer), be prepared to discuss key points from the texts as well as your own evaluation of each, and respond to the facilitator's and other students' comments in discussion. Attendance without engaged and informed participation will not yield an A in this course.

### 2. Thought Pieces

**40 points**

Reading is integral to this course. I expect you to read the assigned material and be prepared to use it as a basis for contributing to the class discussion each week. In preparation for seminar participation, you will be required to submit a Thought Piece in advance of class on eight occasions. In weeks 2 and 5-13 of the semester you will have ten opportunities to submit Thought Pieces; therefore, you will be able to skip your Thought Piece submission on two weeks of your choosing. The Thought Piece will consist of two parts:

- 1) One paragraph discussing an analytical issue or concern provoked by the week's reading assignment, framed to spark class discussion. It is not sufficient to simply identify something you deem problematic or promising—start there, but remember you must critique! Analyze! Respond! Opine! It *may* be helpful for you to consider the following questions and select one to frame your discussion:

What is your assessment of how the author's conception / practice of engaged research affect his or her...

- epistemologies?
- research questions?
- methodologies, or the ways in which s/he approaches her/his research?
- research methods?
- findings?
- writing?
- research products?

- 2) Two questions you would ask the week's author(s) if you had the opportunity to meet her/him over coffee. All authors will be invited to join us via Skype for an informal Q&A, so you may get the opportunity to ask some of these!

Thought Pieces should be submitted via the appropriate assignments folder on Canvas by 11:59pm on Sunday. Thought Pieces can earn a maximum of 5 points. Thought Pieces submitted after 11:59pm on Sunday and before class on Monday will receive a point deduction for tardiness. They will not be accepted after the start of class on the week they are due.

### **3. Book Review**

**10 points**

In preparation for week 4, each student will select one book from a list of recent edited volumes on the topic of engaged scholarship. S/he will have two weeks to read her/his selected text and write a critical review of the book, due via the appropriate assignments folder on Canvas by 11:59pm on Sunday, September 13. Book reviews will be circulated to your peers. The goal of this assignment is to introduce students to a growing body of literature on engaged scholarship, allow you to explore one text of your choosing in depth, and create a shared repository of reviews that all students can explore and reference moving forward.

### **4. Presentation of Book Review**

**5 points**

During class in week 4 (September 14), students will each have 5 minutes to present an overview of their book review to the class. Presentations will be evaluated based on the presenter's ability to clearly and accurately summarize the text's argument and scope, as well as her/his critical review of its strengths, shortcomings, and overall contribution. Failure to adhere closely to the 5 minute guideline will negatively affect your grade.

### **5. Final Paper**

**20 points**

Students will write a 20-page double-spaced final paper for this course. The paper can be either 1) a position piece on engaged research, situating your approach to the theory, politics, ethics, and methodologies of ethnographic fieldwork and writing an analysis of the relevant literature on the topic; or 2) if you are at the research/writing phase of your MA or PhD project, your own engaged ethnography. The paper must be submitted via the appropriate assignments folder on Canvas by 11:59pm on Sunday, December 6. Late papers will be penalized a letter grade (2 points) for each day or portion thereof that passes beyond this deadline.

### **6. Presentation of Final Reflections**

**5 points**

The last week of class (November 30) students will share their final reflections on the course. You will have approximately 8 minutes to give an oral presentation based on your final paper, followed by peer discussion and feedback. The goals of this assignment are threefold; 1) to provide an opportunity for collective reflection on what we've learned over the semester; 2) to hone your oral presentation skills, vital for careers in a broad variety of employment sectors; and 3) to refine and enrich your final paper by benefit of the group feedback you receive.

### **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	63-69	D		
90-93	A-	80-83	B-	70-73	C-	60-63	D-		

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

All books for this course are available at the USF Bookstore and/or on reserve at the USF Library. You are responsible for locating and acquiring all assigned books. You should make notes as you read and bring these, along with the assigned readings, to class each week.

## **POLICIES**

This syllabus is a preliminary outline for the course and is subject to revision.

### **Communication**

Please make sure you have a current email address registered with the university. Course announcements, syllabus, readings, and films will be communicated via Canvas, accessible through [www.my.usf.edu](http://www.my.usf.edu). Students are responsible for monitoring Canvas for updates. If you need to contact me outside of class, you may visit me during office hours or send me an email. I check email daily, and will do my best to respond to all email messages within 24 hours. In the event of an emergency, you should contact the Dean for Students.

### **Formatting of Written Work**

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

### **References and Citations**

You must use the American Anthropological Association style for bibliographies/ references/ works cited (see [www.aaanet.org/publications/style\\_guide.pdf](http://www.aaanet.org/publications/style_guide.pdf)), 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](http://aaanet.org/publications/style_guide.pdf) for more details. All papers must be proofread in their entirety prior to submission.

### **Writing Studio**

The USF Writing Studio is a free resource for USF students. A trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at [lib.usf.edu/writing](http://lib.usf.edu/writing), stop by LIB-125, or call 813.974.8293.

### **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 policies on academic integrity. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, please consult the University of South Florida's Graduate Catalogue. 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, 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. Please see the Students with Disabilities Services website for more information: [sds.usf.edu](http://sds.usf.edu).

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **PERSPECTIVES ON ETHNOGRAPHIC ENGAGEMENT**

#### **WEEK 1: ENGAGED ETHNOGRAPHY, PROCESS AND PRODUCT**

August 24

#### **WEEK 2: ENGAGING CONTRADICTIONS**

August 31

Hale, Charles R., ed.

2008 Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics and Methods of Activist Scholarship.  
Berkeley: University of California Press.

#### **WEEK 3: NO CLASS—*Labor Day***

September 7

#### **WEEK 4: PERSPECTIVES ON ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP**

September 14

*For this week's reading, each student will select a book from a list of edited volumes on engaged research. S/he will prepare a written book review to share with classmates and present a summary of the volume in class.*

## **ETHNOGRAPHIES OF SURVIVAL AND RESISTANCE**

### **WEEK 5: LIFE INTERRUPTED**

September 21

Brennan, Denise

2014 *Life Interrupted: Trafficking into Forced Labor in the United States*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

### **WEEK 6: WHEN I WEAR MY ALLIGATOR BOOTS**

September 28

Muehlmann, Shaylih

2013 *When I wear my Alligator Boots: Narco-Culture in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

### **WEEK 7: SIDEWALK**

October 5

Duneier, Mitchell

1999 *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

### **WEEK 8: BLACK WOMEN AGAINST THE LAND GRAB**

October 12

Perry, Keisha-Khan Y.

2013 *Black Women against the Land Grab: The Fight for Racial Justice in Brazil*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

### **WEEK 9: OUTLAWED**

October 19

Goldstein, Daniel M.

2012 *Outlawed: Between Security and Rights in a Bolivian City*. Durham: Duke University Press.

## **ETHNOGRAPHIES OF CAPITAL AND EMPIRE**

### **WEEK 10: DRIVING AFTER CLASS**

October 26

Heiman, Rachel

2015 *Driving After Class: Anxious Times in an American Suburb*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

**WEEK 11: WHEN EXPERIMENTS TRAVEL**

November 2

Petryna, Adriana

2009 *When Experiments Travel: Clinical Trials and the Global Search for Human Subjects*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**WEEK 12: BASE NATION**

November 9

Vine, David

2015 *Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World*. New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt.

**WEEK 13: THE LAND OF OPEN GRAVES**

November 16

De León, Jason

2015 *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

**WEEK 14: NO CLASS—AAA Annual Meeting & Thanksgiving**

November 23

**WEEK 15: FINAL REFLECTIONS**

November 30

*Students will present their final reflections in class.*

**Enjoy the break!**