

## **ANTHROPOLOGY 810.21: RESEARCH DESIGN AND ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS**

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Spring 2009  
Hours of instruction: R 2:30-5:18PM  
Classroom: SM 4094

Office hours: W 9-12 and by appointment

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The focus of this course is on research design and ethnographic methods. Instead of attempting to survey the vast literature on ethnographic fieldwork, we focus on a selection of methods that are central to much anthropological fieldwork –participant observation, interviewing, writing fieldnotes, surveys, freelists, pile-sorts, and rankings. Other techniques and issues will be incorporated as they emerge from student inquiry. In addition to data-gathering methods, we 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 learn how to design a research project and write it up in a research proposal. Students can use this course to design their MA or Ph.D. research project. The 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 and be prepared to discuss them.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

You will learn how to collect the data to answer your research question through hands-on experience with a range of ethnographic methods, critical discussion of issues in ethnographic research, and design of an ethnographic study.

### **REQUIRED READING**

The following books are required reading and available in the OSU Book Store

Agar, Michael H.

1996 *The professional stranger: an informal introduction to ethnography*. Second edition. London: Academic Press.

Bernard, H. Russell

2006 *Research methods in anthropology: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Fourth edition. Walnut Creek (CA): Altamira Press.

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

1995 *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional required and recommended readings will be made available through Carmen.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

**Attendance and Participation:** Students are expected to be actively engaged in class; that is, coming to class prepared, paying attention, and contributing to discussions both by making comments and by facilitating other people's participation. It is difficult to do well in the course if sessions are missed. Therefore, *attendance at every class meeting is required*. Late arrival and early departure are considered poor involvement; 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 classmates.

**Research Proposal:** The final product of this course is a research proposal. The proposal is divided in six sections: introduction, literature review, objectives, population and sample, methods, and analysis. The sections are due over the course of the quarter (see schedule below). The proposal should follow the guidelines of the NSF Grant Proposal Guide. Detailed instructions on what to cover in each section will be posted on the course wiki. The complete research proposal, including an IRB application (for exemption, expedited or full review), is due in finals week. All sections have to be posted on the course wiki and need to be continuously revised and updated as you design and write your research proposal over the course of the quarter.

**Evaluation:** Course responsibilities will be weighted in the following way:

Attendance, participation, homework assignments	25%
Proposal sections (6)	30%
Research proposal	45%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Final grades are based on a standardized distribution, using the total number of points for the course: A 92; A- 90-91; B+ 88-89; B 82-87; B- 80-81; C+ 78-79; C 72-77; C- 70-71; D+ 68-69; D 60-67; E < 60.

### Special notes from the instructor:

- Except in cases of properly documented illness or personal emergency will late assignments be accepted; they will progressively lose value and will be evaluated and returned as time allows.
- I will use the wiki to post assignments and other information for the class (e.g., cancelled office hours, changes in reading assignments).
- The address of the course wiki is: <http://anthropology81021.wikidot.com/start>. I will email an invitation to join the wiki to your OSU email address.
- Email related to the class must be marked in the subject line in the following way: *ANTH 810.21 your last name*.
- If you are a student with a disability and need accommodations, you are welcome to meet with me to discuss arrangements for the accommodations.
- Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

## **SCHEDULE AND TOPICS<sup>1</sup>**

### **WEEK 1: ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH**

Read: Agar (1996:1-72), Tobin et al. (1989:1-11, 12-71)

### **WEEK 2: RESEARCH DESIGN**

Read: Johnson (1998:131-167), Bernard (2006:28-68, 109-145), Lareau (2003:1-13, 259-287)

- *Introduction section is due*

### **WEEK 3: SAMPLING**

Read: Agar (1996:73-131), Bernard (2006:146-209), Cliggett (2005:23-46)

- *Objectives section is due*

### **WEEK 4: UNSTRUCTURED & SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Read: Spradley (1980:55-91), Bernard (2006:210-250), Agar (1996:133-166)

- *Population and sample section is due*

### **WEEK 5: STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Read: Bernard (2006:251-298, 318-341)

- *Literature review section is due*

### **WEEK 6: FORMAL METHODS**

Read: Bernard (2006:299-317), Agar (1996:167-221), Flinn (1998:85-96)

### **WEEK 7: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

Read: Spradley (1980:63-84), Bernard (2006:342-450)

### **WEEK 8: FIELDNOTES**

Read: Emerson (1995:1-141), Ottenberg (1990:139-160)

- *Methods section is due*

### **WEEK 9: DATA ANALYSIS**

Read: Emerson (1995:142-216), Charmaz (2001:335-352), Bernard (2006:451-548)

### **WEEK 10: ETHICS AND IRB**

Read: AAA Code of Ethics, AAA Statement on Ethnography and Institutional Review Boards (2004), Winslow (2006:519-521), Plattner (2006:525-528) Agar (1996:223-252)

- *Data analysis section is due*

### **FINALS WEEK**

- *Final version of the research proposal is due Monday June 8<sup>th</sup> before 5PM*

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that this is a tentative schedule and that the instructor reserves the right to make changes.