

ANTHROPOLOGY H650: RESEARCH DESIGN AND ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

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Quarter
Hours of instruction
Classroom

Office hours: Day/time or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The primary focus of this course is on hands-on student research activities. 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, writing fieldnotes, interviewing, 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. This course is highly recommended for all honors students who are considering doing social science research for an honors thesis.

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 research article.

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 through participation in a collaborative research project in which we use a wide range of ethnographic methods. 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.

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.

Galman, Sally Campbell

2007 Shane, The Lone Ethnographer: A Beginner's Guide to Ethnography Lanham (MD): Altamira Press.

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. In this collaborative research project we will as a class design a study, collect data, analyze data, and write up the results in a research article. Most of the collaborative work on the course project will be conducted in class on Wednesday in the Learning Collaboration Studio in 060 Science and Engineering Library.

The course project in Autumn 2010 will examine student 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 student use of the library we will use different kinds of (participant) observations and multiple kinds of structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews with students, librarians, and architects. We will write up the results in a report that we will present 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 six parts: introduction, literature review, objectives, population and sample, methods, and analysis. The sections are due over the course of the quarter (see schedule below). 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 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 and participation	15%
Course project	40%
Proposal parts (6)	20%
Research proposal	25%
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:

- 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 for the course project and for students' individual research proposals. I strive to make this a paperless course.
- The address of the course wiki is: <http://anthropologyH650.wikidot.com/start>. I will email an invitation to join the wiki to your OSU email address.
- I will use Carmen to post information for the class (e.g., syllabus, cancelled office hours, changes in reading assignments). Check it at regularly (at least twice a week).
- Email related to the class must be marked in the subject line in the following way: *ANTH H650 your last name*.

SCHEDULE AND TOPICS¹

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 (1979:55-91), 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*

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

READING LIST

- Agar, Michael H.
1996 [1980] *The professional stranger: an informal introduction to ethnography*. London: Academic Press.
- Bernard, H. Russell
2006 [1994] *Research methods in anthropology: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Walnut Creek (CA): Altamira Press.
- Charmaz, Kathy
2001 Grounded theory. *In* *Contemporary field research: perspectives and formulations*. R.M. Emerson, ed. Pp. 335-352. Long Grove (IL): Waveland Press.
- Cliggett, Lisa
2005 *Grains from grass: aging, gender, and famine in rural Africa*. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press. Pp. 23-46.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw
1995 *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Flinn, Juliana
1998 Freelists, ratings, averages, and frequencies: why so few students study anthropology. *In* *Using methods in the field: a practical introduction and casebook*. V.C. de Munck and E.J. Sobo, eds. Pp. 85-96. Walnut Creek (CA): Altamira Press.
- Galman, Sally Campbell
2007 *Shane, The Lone Ethnographer: A Beginner's Guide to Ethnography*. Lanham (MD): Altamira Press.
- Johnson, Jeffrey C.
1998 Research design and research strategies. *In* *Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology*. R.H. Bernard, ed. Pp. 131-171. Walnut Creek (CA): Altamira Press.
- Lareau, Annette
2003 *Unequal childhoods: class, race, and family life*. Berkeley (CA): University of California Press. Pp. 1-13, 259-287.
- Ottenberg, Simon
1990 Thirty years of fieldnotes: changing relationships to the text. *In* *Fieldnotes: the makings of anthropology*. R. Sanjek, ed. Pp. 139-160. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press.
- Plattner, Stuart
2006 Comment on IRB regulation of ethnographic research. *American ethnologist* 33(4):525-528.
- Spradley, James P.
1979 *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Wadsworth. Pp. 55-91.
- Spradley, James P.
1980 Participant observation. New York: Wadsworth. Pp. 63-84.
- Tobin, Joseph, David Wu, and Dana Davidson
1991 *Preschool in Three Cultures: Japan, China and the United States*. New Haven (CT): Yale University Press. Pp. 1-71.
- Winslow, Deborah
2006 NSF supports ethnographic research. *American ethnologist* 33(4):519-521.