

**ENGLISH 770.02: INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDY IN FOLKLORE:  
FIELDWORK**

Autumn 2004

Professor Amy Shuman

Office hours: Tuesday, Thursday 11:00-12:00

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**TEXTS**

James Spradley *The Ethnographic Interview* N.Y.: Holt Rinehart, Winston, 1979.

*Journal of Folklore Research* Vol 37 No 2-3 May-December 2000.

Rosanna Hertz, Ed. *Reflexivity and Voice* Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997.

Additional Readings on electronic reserves and in The Department of English, 421 Denney Hall

**BRIEF STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES:**

This course provides an introduction to the ethnographic research process in folklore and related fields. Topics include the selection of a field site, the design of a project, the entry into the field community, methods of inquiry, documentation, representation issues, grant proposals, and ethical responsibilities.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- Brief comments on each assigned reading to webct, posted by noon before each class meeting.
- Three short assignment
- Final Assignment on a dimension of ethnographic research. For example: a grant proposal, a preliminary project design, a reflective response to a fieldwork issue, an ethnographic account of an event or other research.

**READINGS:**

March 30: Introduction: Cultural brokerage, ethics, collection methods, ethnography

**Part I: Collecting Data**

April 1: The study of folklore in context: performance and the ethnography of communication

Read Folklife and Fieldwork, available online: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwk.html>

**Assignment 1:** Write a brief response to this document, describe its premises, and comment on what is missing according to your vision of ethnographic work and/or folklore. Post your response to webct

April 6: Participant Observation

Read Spradley pp. 3-39; Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 in Hertz;

April 8 Interviewing and Transcribing  
Read Spradley pp 41-91; Read Goodwin on reserve pp. 18-26

April 13 Finding the Right Question  
Read Chapter 6 in Hertz

**Assignment 2:** Transcribe approximately 45 minutes of interview tape from website:  
<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/shuman1/interviews/>  
(Each student will be assigned a different section)

April 15: The role of the researcher  
Read: Diane L. Wolf "Situating Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork" from electronic reserve  
Also: Specifics to be announced: Viewing of "Identity" Identity is conceived by Iraqi puppeteer, Louay Assaf, and performed by Assaf and OSU theatre students. Using traditional Arab shadow Puppets and European rod puppets, the piece depicts an Arab intellectual's search for a new identity that negotiates Arab history and a constantly changing world.

April 20 Ethnography and Disability  
Reading to be announced in conjunction with visit of Michael Berube

April 22 Methods summary  
Read Spradley pp 92-172

## **Part II: Fieldwork Dilemmas**

April 27 Reflexivity  
Read Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7 in Hertz

April 29 Intimacy/Studying one's own  
Read Chapters 8, 10, 12, 15 in Hertz

May 4 Self and Other  
Read Chapters 9, 11, 13, 14 in Hertz

May 6 Studying an event  
**Assignment 3:** Post fieldnotes and a meta-commentary from an observation of an event to webct

May 11 November 7 Further Ethical Dilemmas  
Read JFR special issue "Issues in Collaboration and Representation"

May 13 Continue Discussion of JFR issue  
Ann Carlson and Mary Ellen Strom, 4:30 Wexner Center

May 18 Guest speaker Dean John Roberts on dance ethnography  
Reading on electronic reserve

May 20 Graduate Folklore Food Round-(the)-Table and Potluck

May 25 Research Proposals and Human Subjects  
Read Spradley pp 173-184; Van Manen Chapter 7 on electronic reserve; Human Subjects materials on Electronic Reserves

May 27 Retrospective Epiphanies  
Read Barre Toelken "From Entertainment to Realization in Navajo Fieldwork" and Alessandro Portelli "I'm going to say it now" Interviewing the Movement" on electronic reserve  
Student Presentations and readings posted to webct

June 1 Strategic Romanticism (On electronic reserve)  
Student Presentations and readings posted to webct

June 3  
Student Presentations  
Readings posted to webct

## **POLICIES**

### **Plagiarism Policy:**

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

In this course, you are rewarded for citation and acknowledgement. Please credit all individuals who help you and all sources you consult. Field research requires proper citation.

### **Research Ethics**

You are responsible for the relationships you engage in as part of your research. Your primary responsibility is to the people who agree to participate in this research. Surreptitious recording or other deception is unacceptable and unwarranted. Use the informed consent forms provided by the instructor or devise forms appropriate to the circumstances of your research.

### **Disability Accommodations**

Please inform the instructor of any accommodations that will afford you greater participation in the class. Also, the Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307.