

Spring 2006

Anthropology 475
Anthropological Research Methods

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Office Hours: MW 11:00 – 12:00; MW 3:00 – 4:00 and by appointment

I. Objectives

This course introduces undergraduate and graduate students to the basic field methods in cultural anthropology, including participant observation, direct systematic observation, interviewing techniques, sampling techniques, questionnaires, discourse and text analysis, basic visual anthropology, and archival research. Students will learn to determine which methods are best suited to different types of research goals. Students will learn to write, code and analyze field notes, the building blocks of ethnography, and will also be exposed to other techniques to document human behavior, including film and photography. The class will address ethical issues in the discipline, emphasizing the importance of adhering to the Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association. At the end of this class, students will be able to design and carry out a research project using anthropological methodology. This class emphasizes the complementarity of humanistic and scientific approaches to anthropology.

Anthropology 475 is part of the “Foundations” series of undergraduate classes in the Anthropology curriculum beginning in Fall 2006. It is required of all undergraduate majors and graduate students entering the program. It is a writing intensive course.

II. Format

This class will use a variety of techniques to present and teach materials, but it is not primarily a lecture course. While the instructor will occasionally lecture in order to present overviews of material, students will be learning primarily by discussing readings and working on a class fieldwork project on a topic to be decided jointly within the first two weeks of class. Each student will research an area of interest to her/him, write weekly papers applying methods explained in the readings to his/her particular topic, and present weekly field research reports to the class for discussion. The class will culminate with student presentations on the project; these may be papers, posters or a film, according to the student’s preference, but all must demonstrate proficiency in anthropological research methods. More information on final projects will be available in a separate handout.

Because so much class time will be taken up with active learning, attendance and participation are mandatory. They are crucial to your learning experience. You may miss one class without penalty. If you must miss more than one class, please notify the instructor. You are expected to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. If you leave during the break, you will be marked absent for the entire class. You are expected to arrive prepared, i.e. having read the assigned readings and taken notes on

them, and having prepared your field report for the week as well as any additional assignments the instructor has given. You will lose points each time you demonstrate that you are not prepared for class. Assignments handed in late will also lose points: one letter grade will be subtracted for each day the assignment is late. (Assignments may, however, be submitted electronically if you are not able to consign them in person.) You are expected to participate in class discussions. Participation means contributing to each class discussion with thoughtful, pertinent questions and comments, and maintaining a considerate attitude towards others in the class. This includes not interrupting others, not monopolizing classroom discussions and being respectful of opinions different from your own.

Cell phones and pagers are not allowed in this class. In consideration of your fellow students, please turn them off before coming to class.

Students with disabilities must register with the Center on Disabilities and complete a services agreement each semester. Staff within the Center will verify the existence of a disability based on the documentation provided and approve accommodations. Students who are approved for testing taking accommodations must provide a proctor form to their faculty member signed by a counselor in the Center on Disabilities prior to making testing arrangements. The Center on Disabilities is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110. Staff can be reached at (818) 677-2684.

III. Requirements

This course requires a substantial amount of reading and writing. If you are not able or willing to do the work, you should drop the class.

The following books are required reading for the course:

- Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. by H. Russell Bernard
- Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, by K. M. Dewalt and B.R. Dewalt
- Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*, by R.M. Emerson, R.I. Fretz and L.L. Shaw

These are available at the Matador Bookstore as well as on reserve in the Oviatt Library. Additional required readings will be made available as pdf files posted to the course website (TBA). You will be able to download them and print them from your home computers.

IV. Evaluation

Final grade analysis:

Attendance.....	10%
Participation (including weekly field reports).....	30%
Written assignments.....	30%
Final project.....	30%

V. Grading Scale

93-100 = A	83-88 = B	73-77 = C*	63-67 = D
90-92 = A-	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-	60-62 = D-
88-89 = B+	78-79 = C+	68-69 = D+	59 and below = F

*Please note that for graduate students, a grade of C or below is considered failure.

Week-by-Week Course Syllabus

<u>Week of</u>	<u>Topic and Readings</u>
1/30	<u>Introduction to ethnographic field methods</u> No readings due today.
2/6	<u>Epistemology: what do we know, and how do we know it?</u> Bernard, "Introduction," pp. 9-36 in <i>Handbook</i> ; Schweitzer, "Epistemology," pp. 39-87 in <i>Handbook</i> Discussion and decision on topic of class project.
2/13	<u>Designing the class project; background on topic of class project.</u> Johnson, "Research Design and Research Strategies," pp. 131-171 in <i>Handbook</i> ; Chapter 6 in <i>Participant Observation</i>
2/20	<u>Ethics</u> Fluehr-Lobban, "Ethics," pp. 173-200 in <i>Handbook</i> ; Chapter 10 in <i>Participant Observation</i> ; Magliocco, "Preface to the Second Edition," "Preface" and "Afterword" from <i>The Two Madonnas</i> (pdf file) → Due today: 1-page research proposal! (10%) <i>Class will meet today beginning at 5:30, as the instructor is returning from a conference! Please use the extra time to refine, proofread and print your proposals.</i>
2/27	<u>Establishing Rapport</u> Chapters 1-5 in <i>Participant Observation</i> Recommended: Fernandez and Herzfeld, "In Search of Meaningful Methods," pp. 89-129 in <i>Handbook</i> and Magliocco's "Introduction" to <i>Witching Culture</i> (pdf)
3/6	<u>Keeping Track of Information: Writing Field Notes</u> Chapters 1-3 in <i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes</i> ; "Sample Field Notes" (pp. 209-245) in <i>Participant Observation</i> Recommended: Chapter 8 in <i>Participant Observation</i> ; Magliocco's field notes from Sardinia and San Francisco (pdf)
3/13	<u>Observing and Documenting Behavior</u> Johnson and Sackett, "Direct Systematic Observation of Behavior," pp. 301-330 in <i>Handbook</i> ; Chapter 4 in <i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes</i> → Bring a sample of your field notes to class!

- 3/30 Interviewing
Chapter 7 in *Participant Observation*; Levy and Hollan, "Person-Centered Interviewing and Observation," pp. 333-362 in *Handbook*
→ Due today: behavior observation paper! (10%)
- 3/27 Questionnaires and Other Research Tools
Weller, "Structured Interviewing and Questionnaire Construction," pp. 365-408 in *Handbook*
→ Bring to class a short sample questionnaire you plan to use!
- 4/3 Dealing with Written Data
Farnell and Graham, "Discourse-Centered Methods," pp. 411-457 in *Handbook*; Brettell, "Fieldwork in the Archives," pp.513-546 in *Handbook*
- 4/10 Spring Break; no class!
- 4/17 Using Photos and Film: Visual Anthropology
El Guindi, "From Pictorializing to Visual Anthropology," pp.459-509 in *Handbook*
Guest Lecturer: John M. Bishop, Ethnographic Filmmaker
→ Due today: interview paper! (10%)
→ Bring a camera (still or video, analog or digital) to class!
- 4/24 Processing Data
Chapter 9 in *Participant Observation*; Chapter 6 in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*
→ Bring your field notes, coded or uncoded, to class!
- 5/1 Interpreting Meaning
Chapter 5 in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*; Bernard and Ryan, "Text Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods," pp. 595-645 in *Handbook*
→ Bring your field notes to class!
- 5/8 Putting it All Together: Presenting Data
Chapter 7 in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*; Kottak, "Presenting Anthropology to Diverse Audiences," pp. 737-760 in *Handbook*
- 5/15 Field project presentations due!