

Ethnographic Research Methods in Communities

Spring 2006 **HOD 3450** **Payne 112** **TR 2:35-3:50 pm**

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In a drop of water you can see the whole ocean.
Chinese Proverb

Not everything that counts can be counted.
And not everything that can be counted, counts.
Albert Einstein

Course Description

Through empirical data collection on human behavior in communities, ethnography and other qualitative research methods build hypotheses and theory grounded in the values, organization, knowledge, and aspirations of different communities. This course introduces and explores the tools and techniques of ethnography and their uses in (1) research problem conceptualization, delineation of assumptions, and generation of culturally competent hypotheses and (2) identification and construction of data sets, field research to collect data, and theory building and practical application derived from data analysis. The course is explicitly interdisciplinary drawing upon ethnographic work of anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists and political scientists.

Goals for the Semester

- Develop a comparative perspective on alternative ethnographic approaches
- Learn where techniques of systematic observation are appropriate
- Strengthen intellectual rigor to select among inductive and deductive logics
- Understand how to use different modes and levels of participant observation.
- Master techniques of sampling, life history analysis, unstructured and structured interviews, interaction analysis, focus group discussions, event analysis, content analysis, spatial analysis, and participatory action research.

Course Format

The instructor will both lead discussions and facilitate student leadership of discussions. The seminar includes brief lectures on key themes of the class meeting by the instructor, discussion of dilemmas by students, and ethnographic exercises designed to facilitate learning of specific techniques. It will be assumed that all students have prepared themselves for the class by completing the readings for that class.

Course Evaluation

Examinations. A midterm examination will be inclusive of readings, class presentations and lectures up until that point, and a final examination covers the remainder. In addition, the instructor will assign exercises to practice the use of several data collection techniques. A term project will be due at the end of the semester that will be the culmination of ethnographic work undertaken throughout the semester.

Midterm Exam (30% of grade); Final Examination (30% of grade)

Term Project. Students will select a term project in which they will conduct ethnographic research in a community in the surrounding area, demonstrating mastery of several of the techniques studied in the course. A Term Project Outline of the research must be approved by the instructor.

Term Project (40% of grade).

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Course Schedule and Required Readings

- Jan. 12 Introduction: How Do You Know?
- Jan. 17 The Classic Ethnography
Read: Malinowski, B. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Pp. 1-218. New York: Waveland Press 1984 (original 1922).
- Jan 19 The Classic Ethnography
Read: Malinowski, B. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*
Pp. 219-391. New York: Waveland Press 1984 (original 1922)
- Jan. 24 Putting the Ethnographer into Ethnography
Read: Malinowski, B. *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*.
xxii-315. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World. 1967.
- Jan. 26 Qualitative Methods in Social Science
Read: Bernard, H. R. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (3rd edition). Pp. 1-64.
Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press. 2002.
- Feb. 2 Conceptualizing Research Issues
Read: Glaser, B. G and A. Strauss. "Clarifying and Assessing Comparative Studies" in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Pp. 117-158. New York: Aldine. 1967.
- Feb. 7 Inquiry in Another's Culture
Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Boston: Anchor Books. 1994.
- Feb. 9 Theory Building Using Participant Observation
Read: Schensul, Stephen, J. Schensul and M. LeCompte.
Essential Ethnographic Methods. Pp. 1-120, Pp. 231-269 .Walnut
Creek: Altamira. 1999.
- Feb.14 Term Project Outline Due. Discussion.

- Feb.16 Event Analysis
 Read: Geertz, Clifford. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese
 Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Pp. 412-453.
 New York: Basic Books. 1973.
- Feb. 21 Cultural Competency in Your Own Culture
 Read: Beattie, Julie. *Women Without Class: Girls, Race and
 Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2003. Pp. 1-206.
- Feb. 23 Culturally Competent Inquiry in Your Own Culture
 Read: Myerhoff, Barbara. *Number our Days: Culture and
 Community Among Elderly Jews in an American Ghetto*. New
 York: Meridian Books. 1979.
- Feb. 28 Learning from Observation: Film *Number Our Days*
- Mar. 2 Mid-Term Examination
- Mar. 7-9 Spring break
- Mar. 14 Micro-Level Techniques: Focus Groups & Structured Interviews
 Read: Schensul, Stephen., J. Schensul and M. LeCompte.
 Essential Ethnographic Methods. Pp. 121-190. Walnut Creek:
 Altamira. 1999. Schensul, Jean, M. LeCompte, B. Nastasi and S.
 Borgatti. *Enhanced Ethnographic Methods*. Pp. 1-149. Walnut
 Creek, CA: Altamira. 1999.
- Mar. 16 Meso-Level Techniques: Modified Delphi and Expert Interviews
 Read: Murry, J. and J. Hammons. "Delphi: A Versatile
 Methodology for Conducting Qualitative Research," *Review of
 Higher Education* 18:4:423-436. 1995.
- Mar. 21 Macro-Level Techniques: Community Studies
 Read: Partridge, W. "Banana County in the Wake of United
 Fruit: Social and Economic Linkages," *American Ethnologist*
 Vol. 6, No. 3, Pp. 491-509.
 Kimball, S. T. and W. Partridge. *The Craft of Community Study:
 Fieldwork Dialogues*. 1989. Gainesville: University of Florida
 Press.
- Mar. 23 Capturing the Macro at the Micro Level
 Read: Lutz, Catherine. *Homefront: A Military City and the
 American 20th Century*. Boston: Beacon Press. 2001. Pp. 1-130.

- Mar. 28 Content Analysis
Read: Lutz, Catherine. *Homefront: A Military City and the American 20th Century*. Boston: Beacon Press. 2001. Pp. 131-257.
- Mar. 30 Feminist Analysis (Sarah Vanhooser - guest lecture)
Read: to be announced.
- April 4 Interaction Analysis
Read: Peshkin, Alan. *God's Choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press. 1986. Pp. ix-299.
- April 6 Oral History Analysis
Read: Anglin, Mary. *Women, Power and Dissent in the Hills of Carolina*. Champagne-Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 2002.
- April 11 Thick Description: Longitudinal Data Collection
Read: Sanjek, Roger. *The Future of Us All: Race and Neighborhood Politics in New York City*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 1998. Pp. 1-212.
- April 13 Thick Description: How Do You Know Change When You See It?
Read: Sanjek, Roger. *The Future of Us All: Race and Neighborhood Politics in New York City*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 1998. Pp. 215-393.
- April 13 Term Project Due
- April 18 Participatory Action Research
Read: Fals-Borda, Orlando and Muhammad Rahman. *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications. 1991.
Fox, Jonathan "Lessons from Action Research Partnerships."
LAS/OXFAM Martin Diskin Memorial Lecture, October 9, 2004.
- April 20 Putting the First Last
Read: Chambers, Robert. *Whose Reality Counts?* London: Intermediate Technology Development Group. 1997. Pp. 1-161.
- April 25 Summation and Conclusions
- Final Exam May 2 3:00 pm

Recommended Readings

I. Ethnographic Methods

- Agar, Michael *The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography.*
- Bernard, H. Russell *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.*
- Fals-Borda, Orlando and M. Rahman *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly With Participatory Action Research.*
- Glaser, Barney and A. Strauss *The Discovery of Grounded Theory.*
- Grimshaw, Anna *The Ethnographer's Eye.*
- Krueger, R. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research.*
- LeCompte, Margaret *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research.*
- Kimball, S. and W. Partridge *The Craft of Community Study.*
- Nader, Laura *Naked Science: Anthropological Inquiry into Boundaries, Power and Knowledge.*
- Schensul, Stephen *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews and Questionnaires.*
- Schensul, Jean *Enhanced Ethnographic Methods: Audiovisual Techniques, Focused Group Interviews, and Elicitation Techniques.*
- Schensul, Jean *Mapping Social Networks, Spatial Data and Hidden Populations.*
- Spradley, James *Participant Observation.*
- Spradley, James *The Ethnographic Interview.*
- Stauss, A. and J. Corbin *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedure and Techniques.*
- Stewart, D. *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice.*

II. Some Contemporary Ethnographies

- Agar, Michael *Ripping and Running.
Angel Dust in Four American Cities.
Independence Declared: The Dilemmas of Independent Trucking.*
- Anglin, Mary K. *Women, Power and Dissent in the Hills of Carolina.*
- Arreola, Daniel *Tejano South Texas: A Mexican American Cultural Province.*
- Bettie, Julie *Women Without Class: Girls, Race and Identity.*
- Brandes, Stanley *Staying Sober in Mexico City.*
- Caldeira, Teresa *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation and Citizenship in Sao Paulo.*
- Collier, Jane *From Duty to Desire: Remaking Families in a Spanish Village.*
- Courlander, H. and
Sake Ousmane *The Heart of the Ngoni: Heroes of the African Kingdom of Segou.*
- Das, Venna *Remaking a World: Violence, Social Suffering, and Recovery.*
- Dominguez, Virginia *White by Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana.*
- El Guindi, Fadwa *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance.*
- Frye, David *Indians into Mexicans: History and Identity in a Mexican Town.*
- Gamburd, Michele *The Kitchen Spoon's Handle: Transnationalism and Sri Lanka's
Migrant Housemaids.*
- Geurts, Kathryn *Culture and the Senses: Bodily Ways of Knowing in an African
Community.*
- Ghannam, Farha *Remaking the Modern: Space, Relocation and the Politics of
Identity in a Global Cairo.*
- Gregor, Thomas *Mehinaku: The Drama of Daily Life in a Brazilian Indian Village.*
- Gutmann, Mathew *The Romance of Democracy: Compliant Defiance in Contemporary
Mexico.*
- Hélias, Perre-Jakez *The Horse of Pride: Life in a Breton Village.*

- Hess, Carmen *Hungry for Hope: On the Cultural and Communicative Dimensions of Development in Highland Ecuador.*
- Jorgensen, Joseph *The Sun Dance Religion: Power for the Powerless.*
- Kottak, Conrad *Assault on Paradise.*
- Liu, Xin *In One's Own Shadow: An Ethnographic Account of the Condition of Post-Reform Rural China.*
- Myerhoff, Barbara *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians. Number Our Days: Aged Jews of Venice, California.*
- Napolitano, Valentina *Migration, Mujercitas and Medicine Men: Living in Urban Mexico.*
- Orlove, Benjamin *Lines in the Water: Nature and Culture at Lake Titicaca.*
- Paley, Julia *Marketing Democracy: Power and Social Movements in Post-Dictatorship Chile.*
- Peshkin, Alan *God's Choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School.*
- Sanday, Peggy *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy.*
- Sanjek, Roger *The Future of Us All: Race and Neighborhood Politics in New York City.*
- Scott, James C. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance.*
- Shostack, Marjorie *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman.*
- Spradly, James *The Cocktail Waitress: Women's Work in a Man's World.*
- Spradly, James *You Owe Yourself a Drunk: An Ethnography of Urban Nomads.*
- Tuzin, Donald *The Cassowary's Revenge.*
- Uchendu, Victor *The Igbo.*
- Yan, Yunxiang *The Flow of Gifts: Reciprocity and Social Networks in a Chinese Village*

III. Some Classic Ethnographies

- Adams, Richard *A Community in the Andes.*
- Arensberg, Conrad and
Solon Kimball *Family and Community in Ireland.*
- Bateson, Gregory *Naven.*
- Cancian, Frank *Change and Uncertainty in a Peasant Economy.*
- Davis, Allison, B.
Gardner, M. Gardner *Deep South: A Social-Anthropological Study of Caste and Class.*
- Drake, St. Clair *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City.*
- Dollard, John *Caste and Class in a Southern Town.*
- Dumont, Jean-Paul *The Headman and I: Ambiguity and Ambivalence in the
Fieldworking Experience.*
- Evan-Pritchard, E. *The Nuer.*
 Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande
- Fals-Borda, Orlando *Peasant Society in the Colombian Andes.*
- Fei, Xiaotong *Earthbound China: A Study of Rural Economy in Yunnan.*
- Flores-Ochoa, Jorge *Pastoralists of the Andes: the Alpaca Herders of Paratia.*
- Foster, George *Tzintzuntzan: Mexican Peasants in a Changing World.*
- Gans, Herbert *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-
icans.*
- Geertz, Clifford *Peddlers and Princes.*
 Agricultural Innvolution.
- Goldschmidt, W. *As You Sow.*
- Goldman, Irving *The Cubeo Indians of Northwestern Amazon.*
- Gonzalez, Nancy *Black Carib Household Structure.*
- Harris, Marvin *Town and Country in Brazil.*

- Holmberg, Allan *Nomads of the Long Bow: the Siriono of Eastern Bolivia.*
- Hurston, Zora Neale *Their Eyes Were Watching God.*
- Hsu, Francis *Under the Ancestors' Shadow.*
- Kluckhohn, Clyde
and D. Leighton *The Navajo.*
- Lewis, Hylan *Blackways of Kent.*
- Lewis, Oscar *Life in a Mexican Village: Tepoztlan Restudied.*
- Liebow, Elliot *Tally's Corner.*
- Lomnitz, Larissa *Networks of Marginality: Life in a Shantytown in Mexico City.*
- Malinowski, B. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.*
Sexual Life of Savages.
Coral Gardens and Their Magic.
- Mead, Margaret *Coming of Age in Samoa.*
- Mintz, Sidney *Worker in the Cane: A Puerto Rican Life History.*
- Moore, G. A. *Life Cycles in Atchalan.*
- Nietschman, Bernard *Between Land and Water: The Subsistence Ecology of the Miskito
Indians of Nicaragua..*
- Parkin, David J. *Palms, Wine and Witnesses: Public Spirit and Private Gain in an
African Farming Community*
*Sacred Void: Spatial Images of Work and Ritual Among the
Giriama of Kenya.*
- Peattie, Lisa *The View From the Barrio.*
- Pearlman, Janice *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de
Janiero.*
- Posa, Ricardo *Juan the Chamula.*
- Rappaport, Roy *Pigs for the Ancestors.*
- Redfield, Robert *The Folk Culture of Yucatan.*

- The Village That Chose Progress.*
- Redfield, Robert
and A. Villa-Rojas *Chan Kom: A Maya Village.*
- Reichel-Dolmatoff,
Gerardo *The People of Aritama.*
*Amazonian Cosmos: The Sexual and Religious Symbolism of the
Tukano.*
- Richards, Audrey *Land, Labor and Diet in Northern Rhodesia.*
- Srinivas, Mysore *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India.*
- Steward, Julian *Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups.*
- Steward, J., et.al. *The People of Puerto Rico.*
- Suttles, Wayne *The Social Order of the Slum.*
- Turner, Victor *Schism and Continuity in an African Society.*
Ndembu Divination.
The Forest of Symbols.
- Wagley, Charles *Amazon Town.*
- Warman, Arturo *We Come to Object: The Peasants of Morelos and the National
State.*
- Warner, W. L. *A Black Civilization*
The Social Life of a Modern Community.
The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups.
The Social System of the Modern Factory.
The Emergent American Society: Large-Scale Organizations.
- Whitten, Norman *Class, Kinship and Power in an Ecuadorian Town.*
- Whyte, William *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum.*
- Young, Michael
And Peter Willmott *Family and Kinship in East London.*

WPartridge
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