

• **ES 480: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS • FALL 2007 •**

Tuesdays, 1:30-4:00pm, Sakamaki A101

Instructor: Ty P. Kawika Tengan

Office hours: George 308, Mondays 3:00-4:00pm

Course description:

How does one become a qualitative researcher? What does it mean to do ethnography, and what are the possibilities for collaboration? This course is designed to introduce students to qualitative data collection methods such as participant-observation and in-depth interviews (including constructing life histories). Just as we can use multiple methods to collect data, we can also utilize a number of methods to analyze the data such as the grounded theory method, discourse analysis, and narrative analysis. As we discuss how we choose appropriate methods to address our research questions, we will mark indigenous and feminist contributions to qualitative methods. In preparation for entering the 'field,' we will explore research ethics and the challenges of building non-exploitative researcher-research participant relationships and collaborations.

This course will be project intensive. All students will undertake a semester-long research project at sites of their choice interacting with participants, recording their discoveries in fieldnotes and digital archives, and doing outside reading about the phenomenon they decide to study. This is an ideal class for students interested in working within their communities or one of the various service-learning community partners affiliated with the Ethnic Studies department. Along with collecting and analyzing data in order to put together a final paper, students will read articles that discuss methods of data collection and analysis, and examples of works by qualitative researchers. Through this, students will learn how to evaluate research based on qualitative methods. This course will require a lot of time and energy. Despite the workload, qualitative researchers find the experience profound, even transformative. Any student with special needs should see me so as to ensure her/his full participation in this class.

Required Readings

Course Reader (available at Professional Image, 2633 S. King St.; call first: 973-6599).

Books (available at Revolution Books, Puck's Alley, 2626 S King St, 944-3106; no credit cards):

1. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (1995)
2. Lassiter, *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography* (2005)

Supplies:

Binder or notebook to record fieldnotes. Once you return to your room from the site, you need to transcribe your notes in as much detail possible on the computer and save them as numbered or dated files.

Tape or digital recorder. If you do not have a recorder, you will need to buy or borrow one. You will also need a stock of tapes for your interviews.

Transcriber. If your project is interview based and your participant allowed you to record the interviews, you will need to transcribing machine to transcribe the interviews into text.

Course Requirements

Once in the field, you need to bring your fieldnotes and transcribed interviews to class.

Participation: This class is discussion-based.

Workshops: The success of our class depends on sharing your experiences in the field with other students and with me. Since each of you will be undertaking different projects, and immersing yourselves in different sites, you will enrich our understanding of doing qualitative research by discussing the challenges and successes of your fieldwork. We expect to learn from each other, and collectively solve problems we face in the field and in

our writing. This is a serious responsibility. At the end of the semester, each of you will present to the rest of the class the final shape your project has taken.

Discussions: Discussions of the readings will be facilitated by students. This means that those of you who sign up as facilitators for the day will bring discussion questions, call on members of the class, and keep the energy of the class moving. Collectively we will ensure a productive environment for discussion. Making your field experience speak to the readings will lend meaning to the readings. I will model such a discussion session for you, and will help you generate discussion questions. The liveliness and usefulness of the discussions will determine the participation grade.

I realize that some of you might not be comfortable with speaking out in class. Please come and speak to me about your difficulties. I will try my best to provide a comfortable space in which you feel safe to speak. We will also work in small groups. So, if you are uncomfortable speaking in front of the whole class, use the groups to share your thoughts and ideas.

Reading: You must come to class having done the assigned reading. Our reading-based discussions will not be successful unless you read. Please remember that the level of your participation in the discussions will also affect the grade of the facilitators, who put in considerable time and effort to generate discussion questions. I have provided some reading questions in the syllabus to guide your reading. There are two types of readings. One set will help you learn the hands-on aspects of research. The other set is geared toward making you sophisticated and critical users of research. You will learn to evaluate a piece of research for its methodological strengths and weaknesses. The premise here is that carefully chosen and executed methods make sound research.

Writing: This is a writing-intensive course. You will be writing fieldnotes, transcribing your notes and interviews, and making analytical notes throughout your time in the field. You cannot whip up your assignments the last minute or do your project in a hurry. This course requires steady, methodical work habits. Some of the writing, like your fieldnotes, will be more informal. The end-product of the semester-long project will be a research paper. You will receive basic guidelines for the writing you will submit. The assignments have been designed to break up your research process into structured steps. You will be referring back to them, and using them in part to write your final project.

Group Work: Expect to work in groups when in class in order to learn how to work collectively collaboratively.

Grade Evaluation

Participation	20%
Assignment #1 (Fieldnotes: from one visit to site)	10%
Assignment #2 (1 page: Interview Exercise)	2.5%
Assignment #3 (2 pages of Coded Fieldnotes)	2.5%
Assignment #4 (5-6 pages: Analytical Memo)	10%
Assignment#5 (1 para: Thesis Statement, and List of References)	5%
Assignment #6 (4 pages: Reflection Piece)	10%
Assignment #7 (15-20 pages: Final Paper)	40%

COURSE OUTLINE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE):

Week 1 (8/21): What is qualitative research? What is ethnography?

Introductions, discussion of course and projects, exercise in ethnography. No readings.

Discussion: What makes research qualitative?

Workshop: Doing ethnography on campus

Week 2 (8/28): Towards collaborative ethnography

- Lassiter, pp.1-75
- Guest: Ulla Hasager: ethnography, ethnic studies, and service learning
Discussion: In-class brainstorming on possible sites and research topic

Week 3 (9/4): Taking fieldnotes

ALL STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE ENTERED THE FIELD BY END OF WEEK.

- Glesne, “The participant observer process” (Reader)
- Emerson et al., pp.1-35
- Bernard, “Participant Observation,” pp. 364-370, 378-386 (Reader)
- Guest: Pensri Ho: being in the field
Workshop: How to take notes

Week 4 (9/11): Ethics, honesty, and positionality in fieldwork

- Lassiter, pp.77-116
- Rollins, “Introduction” and Excerpt from “Invisibility ...”(Reader)
Discussion: What is ethical in research? Ethics of choosing sites and participants.
Workshop: Report on sites; discuss issues around entering site; troubleshooting

Week 5 (9/18): Method: Participant Observation

ALL STUDENTS START TAKING FIELDNOTES AT THEIR SITE

- Levine, Vinson, and Wood: “Subway behavior” (Reader)
- Van Ausdale and Feagin, “Using racial and ethnic concepts” (Reader)
- Martin, “Becoming a gendered body” (Reader).
- Guest: Jonathan Okamura: taking and organizing field notes
Workshop: How to write fieldnotes: Bring your fieldnotes to class

Week 6 (9/25): Indigenous research/ers

- Smith, “On tricky ground” (Reader)
- Kaomea, “Reading erasures” (Reader)
- Dupuis, “Right Practice” (Reader)
- Guest: Noelani Goodyear-Ka’opua
Workshop: Swap fieldnotes and discuss data collecting process

Week 7 (10/2): Data Analysis: Coding

ASSIGNMENT #1 FIELDNOTES: DUE IN CLASS

- Emerson et al. “ Processing fieldnotes: coding and memoing” pp. 142-155
- Example of coding (Reader)
- Guest: Roderick Labrador: insider research
Workshop: Learning how to code. Bring printed batch of fieldnotes with 2” margin to class.

Week 8 (10/9): Method: In-depth interviews

ASSIGNMENT #2: 1 PAGE INTERVIEW EXERCISE DUE IN CLASS

- Taylor and Bogdan, “In-depth interviewing” (Reader)
- Brownstein-Evans, Sample transcript of interview (Reader)
- Bernard, pp.210-250 (Reader)
Workshop: Learning about interviewing techniques, drafting an interview guide, and keeping fieldnotes from interviews. (These notes are also called interview journals).
Continue coding exercise. Print a batch of fieldnotes with 2” margin and bring to class.

Week 9 (10/16): Method: Life History

BEGIN FORMAL INTERVIEWS

- Peacock and Holand, “The Narrated Self” (Reader)
- Romero, “Life as the maid’s daughter” (Reader)
- Guest: Warren Nishimoto: Doing oral histories in Hawai‘i

Workshop: Check-in on progress of projects and coding.

Week 10 (10/23): Data Analysis: Grounded Theory and Analytical Memo

BRING DRAFT OF CODE DEFINITION TO CLASS

- Charmaz, “The grounded theory method” (Reader),
- Vivian, Sample memo (Reader)
- Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, “Processing fieldnotes” pp. 156-168
- Bernard, “Qualitative Data Analysis I,” pp.492-505 (Reader)
- Guest: Monisha Das Gupta: Grounded theory in practice

Workshop: What is an analytical memo? Defining a code: the first step to building a memo

Week 11 (10/30): Data analysis: Narrative Analysis; Memos (contd)

BRING DRAFT OF ANALYTICAL MEMO TO CLASS

- Marjorie Devault. “Ethnicity and expertise: Racial-ethnic knowledge in sociological research” (Reader)
- Bernard, “Qualitative Data Analysis I,” pp.473-479
- Personal Narratives Group, “Origins” (Reader)
- Ginsburg, “Dissonance and Harmony” (Reader)

Workshop: Polish up memos. Last questions.

Week 12 (11/6): Data Analysis: Discourse Analysis; Thesis Statement

ASSIGNMENT #4: ANALYTICAL MEMOS DUE IN CLASS

BRING DRAFT OF THESIS STATEMENT

- Bernard, “Qualitative Data Analysis I,” pp.485-492
- Gee, pp.95-117

Workshop: How to write a thesis: Building an argument. Check-in on library research on your topic.

Week 13 (11/13): Data Analysis: Discourse Analysis

BRING IN INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

- Gee, pp. 118-152

Workshop: Reviewing codes and definitions for thesis statement. Last questions about thesis writing

Week 14 (11/20): Reflexivity and the Politics of Representation

ASSIGNMENT #5: THESIS STATEMENT, LIST OF REFERENCES DUE IN CLASS

- Lassiter, pp.117-164
- Tengan (Reader)
- Chan (Reader)

Week 15 (11/27): Data Analysis: Putting it all together

ASSIGNMENT #6: REFLECTION PIECE

PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

- Blakeslee, “In the best interest of the child” (Reader)

Workshop: Putting the final paper together

Week 16 (12/4): Project Presentations

ASSIGNMENT#7: FINAL PAPER DUE

PROJECT PRESENTATIONS