Soc 478
Analysis in Field Research Methods

This syllabus is from a previous year and is an example of what the syllabus may look like for the upcoming semester. Between now and the first day of class, aspects of the syllabus may change. Do not purchase the text until after the first day of class.

Katherine Irwin
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology
University of Hawaii
Saunders 238
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 1:30 to 2:30 or by appointment (please call first to confirm that I have not cancelled my office hours).
Kiriwn@hawaii.edu
Ph: 956-7257 (office)
Ph: 394-1407 (home)

Course Description:
This course is designed to introduce students to the practice of ethnographic research methods and all of the joys, practicalities, and realities inherent in this tradition. As advanced methods students, you will learn how ethnographic methods fit within traditional social science data gathering techniques. You will also explore the philosophic and practical traditions underpinning this method. There will be several in-class exercises, writing assignments, discussions, and readings that are designed to help students acquire direct experience initiating and completing their own research projects. You will also meet in small working groups and one-on-one with me to discuss the progress of your writing. It is important for you to note that this class teaches ethnographic or “field methods” through direct experience gathering, analyzing, and writing-up data. The topics covered in the course include the history of ethnography, choosing a research setting, initiating a field research project, methods of recording data, qualitative data analysis, and writing-up findings.

Writing Intensive Requirements:
This course fulfills the University of Hawaii’s writing intensive focus requirements. The criteria for these are as follows:

1. The class uses writing to promote the learning of class materials.
2. The class provides interaction between the instructor and students while students do assigned writing.
3. Written assignments contribute significantly to each student’s class grade.
4. The class requires students to do a substantial amount of writing – a minimum of 4,000 words, or about 16 pages.
5. To allow for meaningful professor-student interaction on each student’s
writing, the class is restricted to 20 students.

**Assessment of Sociology Department:**
Each department in the University has been asked to evaluate their teaching effectiveness and our Department conducts this assessment by evaluating students’ written work. This means that we need a disk or CD copy of your final paper for this class at the end of the semester. The Department will randomly select papers in 400 level classes and systematically compare them to papers written in lower division classes to evaluate whether there is improvement in students’ abilities. You do not need to do anything to prepare for this evaluation other than to turn in a disk labeled with your name, student id, course number, and semester. Because our assessment of teaching effectiveness is important for the University, we must require that you turn in this disk. Failure to do so will result in your receiving an F for this class.

**Assignments:**

**Sight without Sound Observation**
Write a 3 page paper based upon your observations of a scene in your setting in which you can see activities, people, and interactions but in which you can not make out distinct sounds or conversations. Place yourself in or around the context and take in the ambience and physical layout of the space and the activities, dress, postures, and demeanors of individuals in the situation. Write notes of your observations while you are in the setting.

Please introduce your paper by describing the physical features of your chosen setting including the layout and mood of the space. Then, please describe, the people in the situation including their dress, demographic characteristics (age, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status), and behaviors. Next, please spend time describing, in a sociological sense, what you can infer from the space and people. For example, what does the intersection of activities, people, and physical space say about our society? Are there some patterns of behaviors that you notice in this scene that might be similar to other situations of leisure and/or work life in Hawaii or American in general? Do men and women act differently in these settings and do these differences point to larger social distinctions and divisions?

**Sound without Sight Observation**
Sitatue yourself in your setting in such a way that you can hear conversations and sounds but can not see activities or the physical space. Focus on the dialogue in the setting and remember as much of the verbatim dialogue that you can. In your 3 page paper, reproduce as much of the conversation that you can. Once relating the conversation, please make some interpretations about the scene. For example, what can you glean about the relationships in the setting, the characteristics of the subculture, or any other facets of the setting from the conversation? In other words, how much can we interpret about the world around us from what people say?

**Field Notes**
Two times in the semester you will present and turn in your field notes. You will also turn in your field notes on the last day of class. While you will only turn in your field
notes three times, you should be taking field notes at least two times each week. Please purchase a binder or notebook for your field notes and place your name and contact information on the first page of the field notebook. If you have neat handwriting, feel free to handwrite your notes, however, if you do not, please type your field notes and place them in your binder.

Throughout the semester, you will be instructed how to focus your field notes. In the first few weeks of the course, you will focus on your life, your thoughts, and activities. In this way, your field notes will help you identify and explore “where you are” and where to begin your research. Once you have selected your setting, your field notes should focus on features of your setting. By the end of the semester, you will be focusing your writing on making connections between your setting and society in general. You will turn in your field notebooks on the day that you are required to present findings from your study and on the last day of class, this is to make sure that you have completed all the required field note entries. You must place the date that you have taken your notes at the top of each entry. Students will sign up for these short presentations during the first week of class.

Annotated Outline
You will turn in an annotated outline of your final paper. Following the instructions given to you during the writing workshops, you will identify two to three themes that you see emerging in your data. Once you have identified these themes, you will write a few lines describing the features of each of these themes. This outline will serve as the base of the final 15 page paper that you will produce at the end of the semester. By turning in your thematic outline to me, I will have the chance to reflect on your writing and offer you guidance before you set out to compose your final research paper.

Methods Paper
You will turn in a 5 page methods paper to me in class. The paper will review how you collected data, the role you took in the field, the different features of the setting that you selected, and how you gathered data.

Draft of Final Paper
A 10 page draft of your paper will also be due during the semester (see the attached assignments). The paper should be a more formal version of your annotated outline, although it does not need to be as formal as your final paper. You should include the comments that I have made on your annotated outline in this draft of your paper.

Final Paper
On Wednesday, May 4th, your 15 page final research paper will be due in class. The paper will have the following sections: Introduction, Methods, Data (including the two to four themes that you identified in your annotated outline (with any changes that I recommended), and Conclusion. In essence, the final research paper is your presentation of your work throughout the semester and your chance to demonstrate that you can produce college level research. Throughout the semester we will hold several writing workshops designed to help you compose the paper and describe how to organize each
Also, do not forget to turn in a disk with a copy of your paper labeled with your name, id number, course number, and semester.

Final Presentation
Each student will be asked to present their papers during the last two weeks of class. Presentations should not be longer than 10 minutes. The aim of these presentations is to have students provide a verbal description of their written work and, in this way, reinforce what students’ have learned during the semester. Students will also have the chance to hear feedback from others about their work, therefore, I encourage students to sign up for the first few days of presentation so that they include helpful comments and suggestions from others in their final papers.

Late Assignments
Your papers will be marked down one letter grade for each day that they are late. A weekend day counts as one day. If you are turning a paper in to me via my mailbox in the sociology office, you must acquire a time and date stamp that is located in Saunders Hall room 247. Any work that is slipped under my door will receive an F. In addition, any paper that appears in my mailbox without a day and time stamp will also receive an F.

You will be granted extensions for your work if you meet the following criteria:

1) You have confronted a situation that is deemed by a relevant professional (i.e. coach, doctor, alternative health care professional) to be an emergency or an urgent situation requiring your attention. You must provide a note from this relevant professional describing your circumstances.

2) You have received permission from me for an extension before the urgent situation or as soon after your emergency as possible. The timing of the extension will be decided by Professor Irwin and will depend upon the nature of your situation.

Rewriting Work
Students will have the opportunity to re-write any assignment (other than the final paper) to improve their grades. In order to re-write a paper, however, you must first meet with me to discuss the revisions that you hope to make. This will allow me to make sure that you are receiving feedback from me before you embark on revisions. You must turn in the original paper with the revisions to me on the date that I give you. I require this step for your own protection. Too often students revise work without direction and, although they have shed considerable blood, sweat, and tears on the project, they often find that their grade has not improved. Therefore, it is important for us to meet and discuss your revision plans so that I know that you are on the right track.

Class Attendance and Participation
You will be graded on your attendance and participation in class. Because this course is designed to offer students a supportive environment to learn about and conduct their own
ethnographic research, your participation and attendance are crucial to the success of the class for other students. I encourage you to discuss your research, questions, and interpretations of the readings with other students and, in this way, form a student-centered learning environment. While I will provide you with some of the basics regarding the literature on ethnographic methods, I will not lecture in this course. Thus the quality and quantity of information shared in the class will depend upon your participation.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sight without Sound Observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sound without Sight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Outline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper (includes your ability to respond to my comments on your draft of the final paper. You will receive an F on your final paper if you do not turn in a draft. Also, do not forget to turn in a disk with a copy of your paper labeled with your name, id number, course number, and semester. Failure to do so will also mean receiving an F for the course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
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Total: 100%

**Required Readings:**


In addition, there will be handouts of articles given to you occasionally during the semester.
SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Introductions & Philosophical Roots
Introduction to the course

Readings due:

Week 2: Research Design & Getting Started
Holiday MLK Day
Readings due:
L&L: Chapter 1

Assignments due:
Friday Field Notebooks (for presenters)
Presenters:
1) ___________________
2) ___________________
3) ___________________

Week 3: Getting In/Establishing a Role/Observing Self and Others
Readings due:
L&L: Chapter 2

Assignments due:
Field Notebooks (for presenters)
Presenters:
1) ___________________
2) ___________________
3) ___________________

Week 4: Self in the Field & Research Ethics
Readings due:
L&L: Chapter 3, Chapter 4 pp 46-53

Assignments due:
CHOOSE YOUR SETTING – turn in a one-page statement of what your setting will be.
Make sure that your name is on your one page statement. You will now be ready to begin your research.

Field Notebooks (for presenters)
Presenters
1) ___________________
2) ___________________
3) ___________________

Week 5: Observation Tools I: Field Notes/Memos/Charts
Readings due:
L&L: Chapter 5 pp. 66-77, pp. 89-98

Assignments due:
3 PAGE SIGHT WITHOUT SOUND PAPER

Field Notebooks (for presenters)
Presenters
1) ___________________
2) ___________________
3) ___________________

Week 6: Interviews & Focus Groups
Field Trip
Readings due:
L&L: Chapter 5 pp. 78-88

Assignment due:
Field Notebooks (for presenters)
Presenters
1) ___________________
2) ___________________
3) ___________________

Week 7: Ethnographic Genres/Analysis Part 1
Holiday – Presidents’ Day
Readings due:
L&L: Chapter 6

Assignments due:
3 PAGE SOUND WITHOUT SIGHT PAPER
Field Notebooks (for presenters)
Presenters
1) ___________________
2) ___________________
3) ___________________
________________________________________________________________________

Week 8: Data Analysis Part 2
Readings due:
L&L: Chapter 7

Assignment due:
Field Notebooks (for presenters)
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END OF ROUND 1 OF PRESENTATIONS

Week 9: Writing Workshop 1: Literature Reviews
Readings due:
L&L: Chapter 8

Assignment due:
Field Notebooks (for presenters)
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Week 10: Writing Workshop 2: Methods Section
Readings due:
Handouts

Assignment due:
Field Notebooks (for presenters)
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Week 11:
**March 21 – 25 Spring Break**

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Week 12: Writing Workshop 3: Data Sections
Readings due:
L&L: Chapter 9

Handouts

Assignment due:
Field Notebooks (for presenters)
Presenters
1) ________________
2) ________________
3) ________________
4) ________________

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Week 13: Writing Workshop 4: Conclusions and Discussions
Readings due:
L&L: Chapter 10

Handouts

Assignments due:
ANNOTATED OUTLINES (everyone)
Field Notebooks (for presenters)
Presenters
1) ________________
2) ________________
3) ________________
4) ________________

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Week 14: Fight the Power: Feminist Ethnography
Readings due:

Handouts

Assignments due:
Field Notebooks (for presenters)
10 PAGE DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER (everyone)
Presenters
1) ________________
2) ________________
Week 15: Postmodernism/Politics of Representation/Power/Feedback
Reading Due:
Handouts

Assignment due:
Field Notebooks (for presenters)
Presenters
1) ______________________
2) ______________________
3) ______________________
4) ______________________

Week 16: Student Presentations & Guidance Sessions

Monday
Presenters:
1)_____________________
2)_____________________
3)_____________________
4)_____________________
5)_____________________

Wednesday
Presenters:
1)_____________________
2)_____________________
3)_____________________
4)_____________________
5)_____________________

Week 17: Student Presentations & Guidance Sessions

Monday
Presenters:
1)_____________________
2)_____________________
3)_____________________
4)_____________________
5)_____________________

Wednesday
Presenters:
1)_____________________

Friday Presenters:
1)  
2)  
3)  
4)  
5)  

Assignments due:
FINAL PAPERS DUE (Don’t forget the disk too!)
FIELD NOTES DUE