Spring 2016

ANTH 370: Ethnographic Field Techniques

Meets: 2:00-3:15 in Saunders 345
Instructor: Dr. Eirik Sæthre
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Office: Saunders 306
Office Phone: 956-3995
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 3:30-4:30

Course Description
In this course, students will gain an understanding of anthropological qualitative research techniques. Topics will include research design, ethics, participant observation, interviewing, life histories, focus groups, and writing up the results of research. This course will also introduce concepts, principles, and issues that impact anthropological researchers. Students will take the lessons that they learned in the classroom and apply them by conducting a small research project that will last for the duration of the semester. The results of this research will be presented to the class during the final week.

Course Objectives
This course will explore:
- The ethics of conducting research involving human subjects in a social science context
- Research design and implementation, including the challenges and rewards of working with a research population
- The primary qualitative fieldwork methods that are used in social and cultural anthropology
- Techniques social and cultural anthropologists use to record the data they collect, analyze these findings, and produce a publishable work

Student Learning Outcomes
At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able to:
- Design a qualitative research project that is ethically sound and respects the rights of participants.
- Engage in participant observation, conduct informal and formal interviews, take a life history, and hold a focus group discussion.
- Use appropriate research tools and techniques to formulate a scholarly argument within an anthropological context.
- Recognize the value of qualitative methodologies for understanding human behavior.

Course Readings:
All readings for this class are posted as pdf documents on Laulima.
Assignments
During the semester, students will independently explore a topic of anthropological interest in greater depth. This is your chance to engage in one of the most interesting and exciting aspects of anthropology: fieldwork. To gain a comprehensive knowledge of their field site, students are expected to work at the same location or with the same group of people for the entirety of their project. To ensure that you have a fresh perspective, you should choose something that you have an interest in but have not done before. We will talk more about appropriate topics in class.

Research Proposal and Informed Consent (15%)
Before beginning fieldwork, students must submit a three page research proposal that includes a project methodology and a preliminary bibliography of at least five anthropological sources (peer reviewed books or articles written by anthropologists or published within an anthropological journal). In addition, students must submit a one page informed consent form that they will give to all participants. Students may not begin conducting fieldwork until their project has been approved by the instructor. This assignment is due on Monday February 8.

Fieldwork Reports (10% per assignment x 6 = 60%)
To gain experience using the techniques that we discuss in class, students will complete six research exercises: (1) initial contact, (2) participant observation, (3) informal interviewing, (4) formal interviewing, (5) life history or focus group, and (6) photography. Students will be turning in these assignments in two alternate formats: oral and written. To facilitate this process, students will sign up to be in one of three groups. On the day that an assignment is due, individuals in one group will give oral presentations lasting approximately eight minutes. Those students in the other two groups will turn in a four page report. The groups will rotate for each assignment so that students will present twice and turn in four written papers.

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Due Date</td>
<td>2/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
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Project Presentation (25%)
After completing their fieldwork, students will present their experiences and findings to the class in the form of a mock conference presentation. I suggest using visual aids such as photos or other ethnographic material from the field to illustrate important points. Your presentation should be scholarly and use anthropological theory to draw conclusions about what you observed in the field. Each presentation will last approximately ten minutes. Group 1 will present on Monday April 25, Group 2 will present on Wednesday April 27, and Group 3 will present on Monday May 2.
Grading Scale

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Style and Formatting Guidelines
All student assignments for this course must follow the standards outlined in the document ‘Guidelines for Papers’, which is available on Laulima. Any paper not conforming to ALL of these guidelines will be penalized.

Late Papers
Unless otherwise stated, papers are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments (including first drafts) will lose ten percent for every day that elapses and will not receive comments from the instructor. On the sixth day, the student will receive a zero. Many students lose their work due to computer crashes and hard drive failures. As part of your Google@UH account, you can store your work online via Google Drive which provides a secure backup. Please make use of this service as I do not make exceptions for hardware malfunctions.

Classroom Policies
- Be on time. Turn off cell phones. No computers are allowed in class.
- All course handouts, readings, and assignments can be found on Laulima.
- Students are responsible for all course content, whether or not they are in class.
- You are responsible for knowing about, and avoiding, academic dishonesty.
- For more information about writing resources on campus and online, go to http://www.mwp.hawaii.edu/writer_help.htm.
Class Schedule

Week 1
1/11  Class Overview
1/13  What is Qualitative Research?
      • Chapter 1: What is qualitative research?
      • Chapter 2: Types of qualitative research

Week 2
1/18  No Class: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
1/20  A Guide to Projects, Paper Writing, and Oral Presentations

Week 3
1/25  Library Orientation
1/27  The Importance of Theory
      • Chapter 2: Philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks

Week 4
2/1   Ethics in Research
      • Chapter 9: Ethical treatment of research participants
      • Chapter 5: The path to institutional review boards and informed consent
2/3   Research Design
      • Chapter 3: Designing a qualitative study
      • Chapter 3: Proposing research

Week 5
2/8   Note Taking
      • Chapter 1: Fieldnotes in ethnographic research.
• Chapter 3: Writing up fieldnotes: from field to desk.

Research Proposal and Informed Consent Due

2/10 What Is Participant Observation?

• Chapter 1: What is participant observation?
• Chapter 2: Learning to be a participant observer


Week 6
2/15 No Class: President’s Day
2/17 Assignment 1: Initial Contact Due

Week 7
2/22 Doing Participant Observation

• Chapter 3: Doing participant observation: becoming a participant
• Chapter 5: Doing participant observation: becoming an observer


• Chapter 3: Knowing through the body

2/24 Assignment 2: Participant Observation Due

Week 8
2/29 Conducting Informal Interviews

• Chapter 1: Why interview?
• Chapter 6: Technique isn’t everything but it is a lot

3/2 Conducting Informal Interviews

• Chapter 7: Interviewing as a relationship

Week 9
3/7 Assignment 3: Informal Interviews Due

3/9 Conducting Formal Interviews

• Chapter 3: Preparation for interviewing
• Chapter 5: Issues in interviewing
**Week 10**
3/14 Conducting Formal Interviews
- Chapter 4: Interviewing

3/16 **Assignment 4: Formal Interviews Due**

**Spring Break 3/21 – 3/25**

**Week 11**
3/28 Taking a Life History
- Chapter 1: What is life history research?
- Chapter 4: ‘Doing’ life history research

3/30 Running a Focus Group
- Chapter 1: Focus groups
- Chapter 4: Focus group moderation

**Week 12**
4/4 **Assignment 5: Life History or Focus Group Due**
- A zone of social abandonment & Brazil (Pp. 35-53)

**Week 13**
4/11 **Assignment 6: Photos Due**
4/13 Writing Up
- Chapter 9: Writing a qualitative study

**Week 14 – Film**
4/18 Film
4/20 Film

**Week 15 – Project Presentations**
4/25 Group 1
4/27 Group 2

**Week 16 – Project Presentations**
5/2 Group 3
5/4 Class Review