

ANTH 323 (Field Methods in Cultural Anthropology)

Spring 2004

TR 1:10-2:30

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Office Hours: M 2:00-5:00, W 2:00-5:00

*I can also meet at other times by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will prepare students to conduct anthropological research and, more generally, to think openly about cultural difference. Students will learn an array of anthropological research methods including participant-observation, structured and unstructured interviews, life histories, sampling and surveys, charting kinship, and library and Internet research. By engaging in practical, hands-on exercises, students will perfect their ability to make informative qualitative observations about social space, communication, transactions/exchanges, body language, ritual practices, and other social behaviors and beliefs.

In addition, the class will familiarize students with issues of cultural difference by offering insightful readings and videos by anthropologist who reflect upon their fieldwork. This cross-cultural encounters “track” exposes students to the personal and subjective challenges of working with human communities. Students will be challenged to confront and discuss issues of cultural relativism, poverty, political activism, and gender. Those who have traveled are encouraged to share their personal experiences with their classmates. Finally, students will learn the ethical standards set forth by the American Anthropological Association, and discuss the many ambiguous ethical scenarios that may arise during anthropological fieldwork.

LEARNING GOALS

- Students will gain practical ethnographic experience by employing an array of methodologies to study social and cultural behavior.
- Students will learn about the personal and ethical challenges that conducting anthropological fieldwork entails.
- Students will learn to construct a social scientific research problem and to “operationalize” it through appropriate methodology.
- Students will enhance their writing skills through weekly mini-projects and a final ethnography.
- Students will learn to verbally express complex ideas and to make and support claims through regular class discussion and debate.

READINGS

A. Books

Students will read five books, which are listed below. The first three concern anthropological methodology, while the last two are “reflexive” ethnographies in which anthropologists openly describe their fieldwork experiences. Each book is available at the university bookstore and each is required. In order to be prepared for in-class discussion, students should complete all readings by our Thursday class (see the schedule below).

- 1) Crane, Julia G., and Michael V. Angrosino
1992 *Field Projects in Anthropology: A Student Handbook*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- 2) DeWalt, Kathleen M., and Billie R. DeWalt
2002 *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*. Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, and Oxford: Altamira Press.
- 3) Kutsche, Paul
1998 *Field Ethnography: A Manual for Doing Cultural Anthropology*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- 4) Raybeck, Douglas
1996 *Mad Dogs, Englishmen, and the Errant Anthropologist: Fieldwork in Malaysia*. Waveland.
- 5) Gottlieb, Alma, and Philip Graham
1993 *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and a Writer Encounter Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

B. Articles

The articles for this class are available electronically on Blackboard by clicking the button “Course Documents.” I will give an in-class demonstration on how to access the articles. *Students are required to print up all articles.* To see a list of articles and their full references, go to the end of this syllabus.

In order to be prepared for in-class discussion, students should complete all readings by our Thursday class (see the schedule below).

FILMS

Students will watch a number of ethnographic films that shed light on the fieldwork experience. All will be viewed in class. See the schedule below for a list of the films we will view.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This class is highly participatory and revolves around regular discussions and group work. Therefore attendance is required. Students are permitted 3 unexcused absences, but each absence beyond that will result in a 3-point penalty to the individual’s grade. To grasp the weight of such a penalty, note that three such absences would lower one’s final grade by a full letter. If the student misses class on the day of a film, group-work, or discussion he or she will be doubly penalized since they will forfeit the points they would earn from film guides and/or participation. [See my on-line Attendance Policy for more details.](#)

GRADING

A. Mini-Projects: 8 @ 5 pts. each	40%
B. Final Ethnography:	45%
C. Participation:	15%

A. Mini-Projects: These projects enable you to explore a variety of methodologies that anthropologists employ while conducting fieldwork. They may or may not be incorporated into your Final Ethnography (it all depends on whether these are a) relevant to your research question and 2) feasible to do with your research community). All are due on set dates as indicated below *except* the Ritual and Life History Mini-projects. Because these two may be harder to arrange, they can be done and handed in any time before the end of week #13 (though I suggest you not leave them to the last minute!). I will give you explicit instructions on how to do these mini-projects one week before they are due. Most are described in the Kutsche or Crane and Angrosino books, and will be about 2 pages long. You may opt out of one of the first seven mini-projects (you may *not* opt out of the Ritual or Life History). All are due on Tuesdays.

- ▶ Body Language: Feb. 3
- ▶ Describing Space: Feb. 17
- ▶ Annotated Bibliography: Feb. 24
- ▶ Charting Kinship: March 2
- ▶ Interview Guide: March 9
- ▶ Gifts & Exchanges: March 23
- ▶ Survey: April 20
- ▶ Ritual: floating (due any time before the end of week #13–April 22)
- ▶ Semi-Structured Interview: floating (due any time before the end of week #13–April 22)

B. Final Ethnography: A major portion of your grade is based on a “big” ethnographic research project that consists of fieldwork conducted with a particular community written up into a paper. The paper will be about 15 pages long, and must incorporate participant-observation (at least 20 hours),¹ interviews (5-10), and any other relevant methodologies that help you to explore your research question. You are free to incorporate data from any of the mini-projects that you do into your Final Ethnography. You must come up with a research proposal by Week #3. The first draft of the Final Ethnography is due in Week #14 and within the next week you must read and give feedback to a fellow student on their paper (the same will be done for you). The final paper will be handed in, and presented informally to the class, during Final’s Week.

- ❖ Proposal for Final Ethnography: February 10 (5%)
- ❖ Field logs for Final Ethnography: March 30 (10%)
- ❖ 1st Draft of Final Ethnography: April 27 (25%)
- ❖ 2nd and last draft of Final Ethnography: May 13
- ❖ Informal Presentations: May 13
- ❖ Peer-response to Final Ethnography: May 4 (5%)

¹discuss this with me if it is a problem

C. Participation: Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, group-work, and debates. Successful participation depends on a careful reading of assigned books and articles as well as attentive viewing of class films. Both instructor and student will contribute to a participation log that will be the basis for determining the student's final participation grade. I reserve the right to give pop quizzes or other means of assessing preparation if it becomes clear that students are not doing the reading. Note: Although you are allowed 3 unexcused absences, I do not recommend that you consider these your "right" since missing class will reduce your participation grade. You may be subject to "double jeopardy" if you take an unexcused absence on a day when we have discussion. If you are not there when we engage in group-work or discussion, that will significantly lower your participation grade for that week.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ETHICS

We will discuss anthropological ethics in-depth. But all students should know, at the start of this class, that we adhere to two key ethical guidelines:

- 1) **NO COVERT RESEARCH:** You are a Gettysburg student conducting anthropological research. All people you work with closely and regularly *in a non-public domain*, including those you are interviewing, should be aware of this.
- 2) **PROTECT YOUR INFORMANTS AT ALL TIMES:** You must keep the identity of your informants anonymous and you cannot reveal things in public that might damage him or her.

HONOR CODE

In order to participate as a registered student in this class, you must agree to adhere to the standards of academic integrity espoused by Gettysburg College. In particular, you must write and sign the Gettysburg Honor's Pledge at the end of all written work.

The Gettysburg Honor's Pledge affirms that you have not cheated on an exam or plagiarized an essay or other take-home assignment. It is considered plagiarism when you:

- Submit the words, sentences, ideas, conclusions, and/or examples from a source (a book an article, the Internet, another student's paper) without citing the source.
- Submit another person's work in place of your own
- "Recycle" a paper that was written for another class and for which you have already received credit
- Knowingly aided another student in plagiarizing an assignment as defined above.

Violations of this Honor code will be penalized according to the college's policies. For more information on the Gettysburg Honor Code go to: http://www.gettysburg.edu/academics/acad/honor_code/index.html.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities should notify me as soon as possible so that I can make all reasonable efforts to accommodate your needs.

SCHEDULE

♣= Mini-Projects
 ◆= Final Ethnography

*complete all readings by Thursday and be prepared for discussion or group work

*complete all assignments by Tuesday

1	<p>January 27 & 28</p> <p>TOPICS: Introduction to anthropological fieldwork</p> <p>🎬Film: “Cannibal Tours”</p>	<p>READINGS: ◆Raybeck book, chs. 1-4 ◆Dewalt book, chs. 1 & 2 ◆Crane book, p. 1-21</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: none</p>
2	<p>February 3 & 5</p> <p>TOPICS: Participant-Observation Cross-Cultural Encounters</p> <p>🎬Film: “A World of Differences”</p>	<p>READINGS: ◆Raybeck book, chs. 5-6 ◆Dewalt book, chs. 3, 4 & 6 ◆Kutsche book, p. 38-57 ◆Crane book, p. 1-21</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♣ Body Language</p>
3	<p>February 10 & 12</p> <p>TOPICS: Participant-Observation, continued Confronting Cultural Relativism</p> <p>🎬Film: “To Find the Baruya Story: An Anthropologist at Work with a New Guinea Tribe”</p>	<p>READINGS: ◆Raybeck book, chs. 7-11 ◆Crane book, p. 64-74 & 179-189</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ◆ Proposal for Final Ethnography</p>
4	<p>February 17 & 19</p> <p>TOPICS: Doing Background Research in Cultural Anthropology Relationships with “Informants” and “Collaborators”</p> <p>Library Workshop (Thursday) *meet in Musselman Library</p>	<p>READINGS: ◆Turner e-reserve ◆Behar #1 e-reserve ◆Kutsche book, p. 13-26</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♣ Describing Space</p>

5	<p>February 24 & 26</p> <p>TOPICS: Taking, Organizing, & Analyzing Fieldnotes Cross-Cultural Encounters</p>	<p>READINGS: ◆Dewalt book, chs. 8 & 9 ◆Emerson et al. e-reserve (change this—wrong chapter. Use chapter 4)</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♣ Annotated Bibliography</p>
6	<p>March 2 & 4</p> <p>TOPICS: Interviewing</p>	<p>READINGS: ◆Gottlieb book, chs. 1-4 ◆Crane book, p. 44-63</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♣ Charting Kinship</p>
7	<p>March 9 & 11</p> <p>TOPICS: Interviewing, continued My fieldwork slides</p>	<p>READINGS: ◆Gottlieb book, chs. 5-7 ◆Dewalt book, ch. 7</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♣ Interview Guide</p>
8	<p>March 16 & 18</p> <p>SPRING RECESS</p>	<p>READINGS: ◆Gottlieb book, chs. 7-end ◆Kutsche book, p. 85-209 forgot to assign Kutch chapter on ritual</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: none</p>
<p><i>Note the following two “floating” Assignments, which have no set due date. They can be handed in any time before the end of week #13</i></p>			<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♣ Ritual ♣ Life History</p>
9	<p>March 23 & 25</p> <p>TOPICS: Studying Ritual Gender & Fieldwork Will have to finish talking about interviewing and errors</p> <p>🎬Film clips on ritual</p>	<p>READINGS: ◆Dewalt book, ch. 5 ◆Briggs e-reserve ◆Kondo e-reserve</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♣ Gifts & Exchanges will make this due on Thursday</p>

10	<p>March 30 & April 1</p> <p>TOPICS: Collecting Life Histories Gender & Fieldwork, continued teach how to use Transcriber program</p> <p>🎬Film: “N!ai: Story of a !Kung Woman”</p>	<p>READINGS: ♦Shostak e-reserve ♦Crane book, p. 75-107</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♦ Field logs for Final Ethnography</p>
11	<p>April 6</p> <p>TOPICS: Ethics & Fieldwork: The Anthropologist as Activist</p>	<p>READINGS: ♦Scheper-hughes e-reserve ♦Hodgson e-reserve</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: none</p>
12	<p>April 13 & 15</p> <p>TOPICS: Ethics & Fieldwork: Human Subjects Protocols <i>*Move this to much earlier in class!</i></p> <p>🎬Film: “A Man Called Bee” NEEDS TO BE VIEWED OUTSIDE OF CLASS</p>	<p>READINGS: ♦Bourgois e-reserve ♦Geest e-reserve ♦Tierney e-reserve ♦Dewalt book, ch. 10</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: none</p>
13	<p>April 20 & 22</p> <p>TOPICS: Sampling & Surveying Final Fieldwork Issues: Understanding</p> <p>🎬Film: “Margaret Mead: Taking Note”</p>	<p>READINGS: ♦Rosaldo e-reserve ♦Behar #2 e-reserve ♦Winther e-reserve</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♣ Survey</p>
14	<p>April 27 & 29</p> <p>TOPICS: Sampling & Surveying Final Fieldwork Issues: Knowing</p> <p>🎬Film: “Rigobertu Menchu: Broken Silence”</p>	<p>READINGS: ♦Burgos-deBray e-reserve ♦Stoll e-reserve</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♦ 1st Draft of Final Ethnography</p>

<p>15 May 4 & 6</p> <p>TOPICS: Wrap-up Final Fieldwork Issues: Believing</p> <p>🎬Film: “In Her Own Time: Barbara Myerhoff’s Final Fieldwork” NEEDS TO BE VIEWED OUTSIDE OF CLASS</p>	<p>READINGS: ♦Stoller e-reserve</p>	<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♦ Peer-response to Final Ethnography</p>
<p>FINAL’S WEEK Thursday, May 13, 8:30 AM</p>		<p>ASSIGNMENTS: ♦ 2nd and last draft of Final Ethnography</p> <p>Informal Presentations</p>

List of articles and chapters on e-reserve

Behar, Ruth
 1993 Excerpts. *In Translated Woman : Crossing the Border With Esperanza's Story*. Ruth Behar, Pp. 1-20; 225-264. Boston: Beacon Press.

1996 The Vulnerable Observer. *In The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*. Ruth Behar, Pp. 1-33. Boston: Beacon Press.

Bourgois, Philippe
 1990 Confronting Anthropological Ethics: Ethnographic Lessons From Central America. *Journal of Peace Research* 27(1):43-54.

Briggs, Jean
 1986 Kapluna Daughter. *In Women in the Field: Anthropological Experiences*. Peggy Golde, ed. Pp. 19-46. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Burgos-Debray, Elisabeth
 1983 Introduction & Chapter I (The Family) & Chapter XXIV (The Torture and Death of Her Little Brother, Burnt Alive in Front of Members of His Family and the Community). *In Rigobertu Menchu: The Story of All Poor Guatemalans*. Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, ed. Pp. xi-xxi; 1-6; 172-181. London, New York: Verso.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw
 1995 Pursuing Members' Meanings. *In Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw, Pp. 108-41. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.

Geest, S. V. D.
 2003 Confidentiality and Pseudonyms: A Fieldwork Dilemma From Ghana. *Anthropology Today* 19(1):14-18.

Hodgson, Dorothy L.
 1999 Critical Interventions: Dilemmas of Accountability in Contemporary Ethnographic Research. *Identities* 6(2-3):201-24.

Kondo, Dorinne K.
 1990 Excerpts. *In Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*. Dorinne K. Kondo, Pp. 3-26. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Rosaldo, Renato
 1989 Grief and a Headhunter's Rage. *In Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Renato Rosaldo, Pp. 1-21. Boston:

Beacon Press.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy

1936 The Primacy of the Ethical: Toward a Militant Anthropology. *Current Anthropology*:32p.

Shostak, Marjorie

1983 Introduction & Chapter 1 (Earliest Memories). *In Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*. Marjorie Shostak, Pp. 1-64. New York: Vintage Books.

Stoller, Paul, and Cheryl Olkes

1987 Chapter 1 (Mehanna); Chapter 2 (A Lesson in Survey Research); Chapter 3 (Discussion Groups); Chapter 4 (Guided Interpretations); & Chapter 5 (Two Birds in the Rafters Are Better Than One in the Bush). *In In Sorcery's Shadow : a Memoir of Apprenticeship Among the Songhay of Niger*. Paul Stoller and Cheryl Olkes, Pp. 1-27. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

1987 Chapter 22 (Frightening Discoveries); Chapter 23 (Evidence of Power); Chapter 24 (Repelled by the Cold in Ayoru); Chapter 25 (An Interpretation); Chapter 26 (The Path to the Wanzerbe); Chapter 27 (A Test of Hardness). *In In Sorcery's Shadow : a Memoir of Apprenticeship Among the Songhay of Niger*. Paul Stoller and Cheryl Olkes, Pp. 117-49. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Tierney, Patrick

2000 The Fierce Anthropologist. *The New Yorker*

Turner, Victor

1967 Excerpt From Muchona the Hornet: Interpreter of Religion. *In The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Victor Turner, Pp. 131-50. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.

Winther, Paul

1992 The "Killing" of Neni Bai. *In The Naked Anthropologist: Tales From Around the World*. Philip R. De Vita , Pp. 100-106. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.