

Fall 2019

EDUC 6560/ITLS 6780 Ethnography

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(my preference is for you to e-mail me through Canvas)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ethnography is the traditional method used by anthropologists to study societies perceived to be “far away” from the Western World, such as the classic work of Bronislaw Malinowski, Franz Boas, and others. Central to ethnographic fieldwork and writing has been the idea of culture. However, culture as a construct has come under significant critique and our world has changed in such a way that it is difficult to constrain ethnographic work to the same kinds of “far away” spaces. Phenomena such as transnationalism and the Internet have forced us to rethink how and where we do ethnography.

This course is an advanced research methods course on ethnography. As Harry Wolcott (2008) has written, ethnography is both a way of “looking” and a way of “seeing.” That is, it is as much a way of conceptualizing questions about the world as it is a collection of methods for doing research. This semester we will engage with both the “looking” and “seeing” aspects of ethnography.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Develop an understanding of the historical foundations and contemporary instantiations of ethnography.
- Develop an understanding of where ethnography fits in a larger landscape of qualitative research methods and the kinds of questions ethnographic research can help us to address.
- Develop the ability to read and critique ethnographic research
- Develop a basic understanding of how to conduct ethnographic research, including carrying out your own mini-ethnography through the use of various ethnographic research skills, including participant observation, field notes, and interviews.
- Practice writing up ethnographic research.

CLASS MEETINGS

Wednesdays 7:15 – 9:45p.m. in Early Childhood Education and Research Center 228 (Logan) or via Broadcast.

You can expect the following from the instructor:

- Weekly overviews or mini-lectures that will offer you some background on the week's readings.
- A weekly wrap-up of the week's key ideas and themes
- Quick responses to requests to meet with the instructor by phone, in person, or in a virtual conference room (within 48 hours but more quickly on weekdays).

We are a small class and I expect that you will all be active participants. This means doing the readings ahead of time and coming to class prepared to engage in lively discussion and any activities I might throw your way.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Cerwonka, A. & Malkki, L.H. (2007). *Improvising theory: Process and temporality in ethnographic fieldwork*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I., & Shaw, L.L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Additional readings will be available via Canvas.

You will also be required to select and read one ethnography of your choosing and approved by the instructor.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Kutsche, P. (1998). *Field ethnography: A manual for doing cultural anthropology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. (this book is no longer in print but can typically be purchased used from Amazon at a very reasonable price).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I expect you to read the syllabus and ask any questions you may have. I also expect that you will check in regularly with Canvas, making sure to read any posted announcements.

1. Class Participation (40%)

We are a small class and I expect that you will all be active participants. This means doing the readings ahead of time and coming to class prepared to engage in lively discussion and any activities I might throw your way. Your overall participation class participation over the course

of the semester will be taken into account when determining your grade. *I will provide you with feedback on your class participation during the eighth week of class.*

Google Slide: Each week, you are expected to create a slide in our shared Google slide deck (accessed via Canvas) by **noon on Wednesday**. In addition, you may comment on or add to others' slides, as long as this is done in a constructive and respectful manner. This slide should contain any thoughts, questions, and/or reflections you have on the week's readings. We will use these as a springboard for class discussion.

Reading Guide & Class Facilitation (10%): You will sign up to facilitate class discussion of the readings for 30 minutes during one class session. You will work with the instructor to develop a "reading guide" of 5-10 guiding questions for the readings to be discussed in class.

Read an Ethnography of Your Choice: In weeks 10 and 11, we will be talking about the conventions of writing ethnography. Over the course of these two weeks, you will read a book-length ethnography of your choosing that has been approved by the instructor.

2. CITI Training (REQUIRED, but no credit)

In order to engage in responsible conduct of research, all members of this course need to complete CITI training for social and behavioral research: <http://rgs.usu.edu/irb/training/>

If you have previously completed the training and it is not expired, you may submit your certificate of completion to Canvas.

3. Mini-Ethnography (60%)

For your final project, you will conduct a mini-ethnography of a public place. More details will follow once everyone has completed CITI training. This assignment will include fieldwork activities throughout the semester and a final write-up of 15 – 20 pages.

Observation 1: Map of a Block (10%)

In this assignment, you will pick a block, defined as a plot of land bounded on all four sides by streets or two facing sides of one block of a single street facing each other and any associated alleys. Given the number of strip malls in Cache Valley, you could also visit a block of stores or the Cache Valley Mall (or a similar mall elsewhere) for this assignment. *Without interviewing the people you encounter*, make jottings to describe each building and/or lot on the block, including alleys. Draw a map of the block, then write a 3-5 page double-spaced annotation of your map. Be sure to explain why the details you note are worth paying attention to and give your reader enough detail to draw their own conclusion. For instance, do not write that there is a "nice" house at 675 Arbor Drive. Instead, describe what you see. The house might be freshly painted, the lawn mowed, seasonal decorations outside the door, and clean windows. *This is surprisingly*

hard. It takes practice to hone your eye. To do this assignment well, you will need to visit the block several times at different times of day.

Observation 2: Specialized Language (10%)

In this assignment, you will pick a public place where you can observe adults over the age of 18 engaged in an activity and talk around the activity for about an hour. It needs to be a public place where no one has an expectation of privacy, such as a restaurant, coffee shop, or laundry mat. Focus on the specialized language of that place and try to understand it from an insider/outsider perspective. In other words, make the familiar strange and the strange familiar. What do “half-caff,” “no whip,” and “skinny” mean in the context of a coffee shop, for example? You will then write this up in field notes (3 or more pages double-spaced document) explaining the context in which this language occurs and how the specialized language contributes to the culture of that place. The general rule is that one hour of observing is equivalent to two hours of writing up your field notes.

Note: You will visit this place at least an additional four times for your final project. You may feel the need to visit more often. You may also want to visit the place at least once before completing this assignment, so as to map the space and the material culture of the space. In a coffee shop, this would be the equipment, the merchandise for sale, the newspapers strewn on tables, the furniture, and so on.

Interview and Analysis Assignment (10%)

In this assignment, you will interview an adult who is a regular at the place where you have been observing (see above). You will audio record what they say and transcribe the interview. I strongly suggest purchasing your own audio recorder, but you can also use a recording app on your phone or tablet. **Please make sure you understand the LOI procedure and how to approach a potential participant before engaging in this assignment.**

You will then write a 1-2 page, double-spaced reflection on (1) what you would do differently next time and (2) how transcription served as a level of analysis.

For your final mini-ethnography, you will need to conduct two additional interviews with adults connected to this place. While I am not requiring you to fully transcribe these interviews because of time limitations, you may find it helpful to do so. It is also helpful to listen to the interviews repeatedly, while you are driving in your car, folding laundry, making dinner, and so on. This will allow you to familiarize yourself with the data and begin to see patterns.

Analytic Memo (10%)

Based on your observations and interviews, you will write a 2-3 page, double-spaced analytic memo about what your data shows.

Mini-Ethnography: (20%)

You will combine the assignments you have completed for this class with at least **four additional observations** and **two additional interviews**. You will analyze your corpus of data and write a mini-ethnography.

Grading Scale

Final Grades calculated as a percentage of total points rounded to the nearest whole number

Your grade will be based on the university grading scale:

A	100-93%,	A-	92-90%	B+	89-87%	B	86-83%,
B-	82-80%	C+	79-77%	C	76-73%	C-	72-70%
D	69-60%	F	59-0%				

TOPICS AND SCHEDULE

Week 1: August 28th: Introductions and Course Overview, What is ethnography?

Hammersley & Atkinson, *Ethnography*, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-19)

Heath, S.B. (1982). Ethnography in education: Defining the essentials. In, P. Gilmore & A.A. Glatthorn, *Children in and out of school* (pp. 33-55). Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, “Preface” and “The subject, method, and scope of this enquiry” (vii – 25)

Wolcott, *Ethnography*, Ethnography as a Way of Looking (Ch. 3) (pp. 43-68)

Recommended:

Hymes, D. (1982). What is ethnography? In, P. Gilmore & A.A. Glatthorn, *Children in and out of school* (pp. 21-32). Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Week 2: September 4th: The Centrality of Culture

Required:

Erickson, Culture in Society and Educational Practices (pp. 32-60)

Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, “Thick Description” (pp. 3-30)

Kirkland, D.E. Why I study culture and why it matters: Humanizing ethnographies in social science research. In, D. Paris & M.T. Winn (Eds.), *Humanizing research* (pp. 179-200). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Recommended:

Borofsky, R., Barth, F., Shweder, R.A., Rodseth, L., and Stoltzenberg, N.M.. (2001). When: A Conversation about Culture. *American Anthropologist* 103(2): 432-446.

Levinson, B.A., Foley, D.E., & Holland, D.C. (Eds.). (1996). *The cultural production of the educated person*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

McCarty, T. & Castagno, A. (2018). Finding the practice in education policy: A disciplinary genealogy. In, A.E. Castagno & T.L. McCarty (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Education Policy*, (pp. 3-22). New York: Routledge.

Schein, E. (1992). Defining organizational culture. In, E. Schein, *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Skeggs, B. (2001). Feminist ethnography. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland, & L. Lofland, *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 426-442). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Spindler, G. & Hammond, L. (Eds.). (2006). *Innovations in educational ethnography: Theory, methods, and results*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Wolcott, H.F. (2008). Ethnography as a Way of Seeing. In, H.F. Wolcott, *Ethnography* (pp. 69-102). New York: AltaMira Press.

[Assignment due: CITI training](#)
[In-Class: Reading Facilitation](#)

Week 3: September 11th: Participant Observation and Field Notes

Required Readings:

Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*, Chapters 1-3 (3rd ed. pp.1-65; 2nd ed. pp. 1-38)

Recommended Readings:

Hammersley & Atkinson, *Ethnography*, Chapters 2-4 (pp. 20-96)

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 4: September 18th: Fieldwork, ethics, and positionality

Cerwonka & Malkki, *Improvising Theory*, pp. 1-104.

Hammersley & Atkinson, *Ethnography*, Chapter 10 (pp. 209-229)

Lewis-Kraus, G. (2016, January 12). The trials of Alice Goffman. *The New York Times*.
Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/17/magazine/the-trials-of-alice-goffman.html>

Recommended:

Agar, M. (2008). Who are you to do this? In, M. Agar, *The professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography* (2nd ed.) (pp. 92-112). United Kingdom: Emerald Publishing Group.

Galison, P. (1999). Objectivity is romantic. In, J. Friedman, P. Galison, & S. Haack (Eds.), *The humanities and the social sciences* (pp. 15-43).

Goffman, A. (2015). How we're priming some kids for college and others for prison. Retrieved from: https://www.ted.com/talks/alice_goffman_college_or_prison_two_destinies_one_blatant_injustice/discussion?.html

Goffman, A. (2014). *On the run*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity – One's own. *Educational Researcher*, 17(7), 17-22.

Ruby, J. (2000). Exposing yourself: Reflexivity, anthropology, and film. In, J. Ruby, *Picturing culture: Explorations of film and anthropology* (pp. 151-180). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Assignment due: Observation 1

Week 5: September 25th: Fieldwork and Access

Cerwonka & Malkki, *Improvising Theory*, pp. 104-187.

Heath, S.B. & Street, B.V. (2008). The ethnographer's field entry and tools of practice. In, S.B. Heath & B.V. Street, *On Ethnography* (pp. 27-47). New York: Teacher's College Press.

Heath, S.B. & Street, B.V. (2008). Setting decision rules for fieldwork. In, S.B. Heath & B.V. Street, *On Ethnography* (pp. 48-67). New York: Teacher's College Press.

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 6: October 2nd: Interviewing & Transcribing

Hammersley & Atkinson, *Ethnography*, Chapter 5 (pp. 97-120)

Ochs, E. (1979). Transcription as theory. In, E. Ochs & B. Schiefflen (Eds.), *Developmental Pragmatics* (pp. 43-72). New York: Academic Press.

Warriner, D.S. (2007). Language learning and the politics of belonging. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 38(4), 343-359.

Assignment Due: Observation 2

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 7: October 9th: Documents and Archival Research

Hammersley & Atkinson, *Ethnography*, Chapter 6 (pp. 121-139)

Miller on materiality or something by Riles that focuses more on documents

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 8: October 16th: Data Analysis 1: Coding

Required:

Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*, Chapters 4-6 (2nd ed. pp. 89-200; 1st ed. pp. 108-168).

Recommended:

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Assignment Due: Interview and Analysis

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 9: October 23rd: Data Analysis 2: Memoing

Hammersley & Atkinson, *Ethnography*, Chapters 7-8 (pp. 140-190).

Saldaña, J. (2016). Writing analytic memos about narrative and visual data. In, J. Saldaña, *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (pp. 43-65). Los Angeles: SAGE.

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 10: October 30th: Writing Ethnography 1

Hammersley & Atkinson, *Ethnography*, Chapter 9 (pp. 191-208).

Ethnography of your choosing, first half of book

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 11: November 6th: Writing Ethnography 2

Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*, Chapters 7-8 (3rd ed. pp. 201-248; 2nd ed. pp. 169-216).

Ethnography of your choosing, second half of book

Assignment Due: Analytic Memo

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 12: November 13th: Critiques

Clifford, J. (1988). On ethnographic authority. In, J. Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* (pp. 21-54). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Clifford, J. (1988). On ethnographic surrealism. In, J. Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* (pp. 117-151). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Clifford, J. (1986). Introduction: Partial Truths. In, J. Clifford & G.E. Marcus, *Writing Culture*

(pp. 1-26). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 13: November 20th: Ethnography in Virtual Spaces

Boellstorff, T. (2008). "The subject and scope of this inquiry." In, T.Boellstorff, *Coming of age in Second Life: An anthropologist explores the virtually human* (pp. 3-31). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Boellstorff, T. (2008). "Method." In, T.Boellstorff, *Coming of age in Second Life: An anthropologist explores the virtually human* (pp.60-86). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Boellstorff, T. (2008). "The Virtual." In, T.Boellstorff, *Coming of age in Second Life: An anthropologist explores the virtually human* (pp. 237-250). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hine, C. (2000). The virtual objects of ethnography. In, C. Hine, *Virtual ethnography* (pp. 41-66). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Miller, D. & Slater, D. (2000). Conclusions. In, D. Miller and D. Slater, *The Internet: An ethnographic approach* (pp. 1-26). New York: Berg.

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 14: November 29th: Thanksgiving Holiday, No Class

Week 15: December 4th: Future Directions, Thin Description, and the New Ethnography

Jackson, J.L. (2013). In, J.L. Jackson, *Thin Description* (pages to be determined). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Stewart, K. (1996). Prologue and The Space of Culture. In , K. Stewart, *A Space on the Side of the Road* (pp. 3-40). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Tsing, A.L. (2005). Introduction. In, A.L. Tsing, *Friction: An ethnography of global connection* (pp. 1-20). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

In-Class: Reading Facilitation

Week 16: December 11th: Final Assignment Due

UNIVERSITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. [Faculty Code Policy #403 \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to establish the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students.

[The Honor Pledge \(Links to an external site.\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#): To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:

"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
 - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually;"
 - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
 - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;

- Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
- Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
- Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- **Falsification:** altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- **Plagiarism:** representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined by the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as any "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." If you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment, you may talk to or file a complaint with the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Office located in Old Main, Room 161, or call the AA/EEO Office at (435) 797-1266.

Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, (435)797-2444. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print, digital, or audio) are available with advance notice.

Contacting the Disability Resource Center (DRC):

- On Campus: Room 101 of the University Inn
- Phone: 435-797-2444
- Website: <http://www.usu.edu/drc/>(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Disability related resources for current students:

- [DRC Student Handbook](#)(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.
- [Deaf and Hard of Hearing Student Handbook](#)(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.
- [Disability Related Scholarships](#)(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.
- [Campus Resources](#)(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.
- [Documentation Guidelines](#)(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.
- [Online Resources for Students with Disabilities](#)(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Diversity Statement

Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Student Services: <http://www.usu.edu/student-services/>(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site., 435.797.1712, studentservices@usu.edu, TSC 220
- Student Advocates: <http://www.usu.edu/ususa/legal/>(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site., 435.797.2912, TSC 340,
- Access and Diversity: <http://www.usu.edu/accesscenter/>(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site., 435.797.1728, access@usu.edu; TSC 315
- Multicultural Programs: <http://www.usu.edu/accesscenter/multiculture/>(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site., 435-797-1728, TSC 315
- LGBTQA Programs: <http://www.usu.edu/accesscenter/lgbtqa/>(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site., 435-797-GAYS, TSC 314
- Provost's Office Diversity Resources: <http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty/diversity/>(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site., (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:

The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State

University: <http://www.usu.edu/student-services/student-code/> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Grievance Process

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: [Article VII. Grievances](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site..

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:

- [Student Conduct](#)(Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

- [Student Code\(Links to an external site.\)Links to an external site.](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [USU Selected Academic Policies and Procedures\(Links to an external site.\)Links to an external site.](#)
- [USU Academic Policies and Procedures\(Links to an external site.\)Links to an external site.](#)
- [Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy\(Links to an external site.\)Links to an external site.](#)

Emergency Procedures

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.