

ANTHROPOLOGY 7075/8075
ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS
Fall 2011

Course Instructor/Coordinator: Dr. Ruthbeth Finerman
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides intensive training in concepts and techniques for conducting anthropological research. Topics include: epistemology; research design; ethics; sampling, validity and reliability issues; qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques; data coding and management; and technical report production. Stress is placed on project planning and mastery of skills, to foster trustworthy and high quality research that benefits scholarship and praxis. Further emphasis is placed on community engagement to advance the research process.

COURSE GOALS:

1. To master key principles of anthropological research, evaluate their relevance for applied anthropology, and comprehend their implications for policies and programs.
2. To conceptualize and design research on significant anthropological problems that advance engaged scholarship for building and strengthening community wellbeing and quality of life.
3. To evaluate critically and organize supporting data from broad sources.
4. To understand and apply professional ethical guidelines, including IRB Human Subjects Protection.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Bernard, H. Russell. *Research Methods in Anthropology*, Fifth Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011.
Additional required and suggested readings will be available on e-Courseware.

REQUIREMENTS: Grades will be based on completion of the following:

- 1) Weekly questions on required readings *plus* lead discussion on one required reading (5% of course grade)
- 2) Five mini-projects using community-based research methods (10% each, totaling 50% of course grade)
- 3) One team-prepared research proposal *plus* self-critique and team presentation (totaling 20% of course grade)
- 4) One written examination on core course material (20% of course grade)
- 5) One portfolio of all course materials (5% of course grade)

COURSE STANDARDS:

- 1) **Attendance:** This core course covers essential material each week. Students are expected to attend all meetings; absence from 3 or more meetings – whether excused or unexcused - may result in a failing grade. If you feel you should be exempted, please contact the instructor for case-by-case consideration.
- 2) **Comportment:** Respectful debate, questions, and shared perspectives are both welcome and expected. All students must demonstrate full, equal, and collegial participation throughout the course, and especially on collaborative projects. Class disruptions are unprofessional; students must arrive on time and prepared to engage fully in training and discussions of required readings. All electronic media must be turned off, unless permission is granted in advance by the instructor. Contact the instructor to discuss any concerns or special requests. Students with disabilities are welcome; please advise the instructor of any special needs early in the term.
- 3) **Late Submissions:** Late and incomplete assignments are unprofessional and will not be graded. Note: the Graduate School prohibits grades of “Incomplete” except in extreme and documented emergencies.

COURSE SCHEDULE & REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1 (8/30) EPISTEMOLOGY IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Objective: understand principles underlying positivist and interpretive approaches to applied social research

Required Reading: none - prepare for next week

(Suggested: Bernard, Ch. 1)

WEEK 2 (9/6) RESEARCH QUALITY & RESEARCH ETHICS

Objective: explore trustworthiness and how operationalization influences outcomes, and clarify the importance of protecting human subjects

Required Reading: Bernard, Chs. 5 and 7, and SfAA Ethics online at <http://www.sfaa.net/sfaaethic.html>

(Suggested: Bernard, Ch. 6; and Agar, "Narrowing the focus")

WEEK 3 (9/13) RESEARCH DESIGN & GRANT WRITING (guest Dr. Michael Duke)

Objective: distinguish basic and applied research designs, and review proposal structure

Required Reading: Bernard, Chapter 4 and Agar, "Who are you to do this?" in ECourseware

(Suggested: Bernard, Ch. 2; AAA Code <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>)

***ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Project 1 - Professional Vita**

WEEK 4 (9/20) LITERATURE & ARCHIVAL SEARCHES (guest P. Rustomfram - McWherter 225)

Objective: learn how to more effectively access, evaluate, cite and utilize source materials

Required Reading: Bernard, Chapter 3

(Suggested: Brettell, "Fieldwork in the Archives")

WEEK 5 (9/27) OBSERVATIONAL TECHNIQUES & VIDEO (guest Dr. Robert Connolly)

Objective: explore methods for gathering structured and unstructured behavioral data

Required Reading: Bernard, Chapters 12 and 14

(Suggested: Johnson & Sackett "Direct Systematic Observation of Behavior")

WEEK 6 (10/4) ETHNOGRAPHIC MAPPING (guest Dr. Ross Sackett)

Objective: learn how to integrate structured visual and spatial data into research

Required Reading: Matthews et al, "Geo-Ethnography" in ECourseware

(Suggested: Cromley, "Mapping Spatial Data"; Stoller, "Researching Place: The Spatial Gaze")

***ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Project 2 - Literature Search & Evaluation**

WEEK 7 (10/11) RAPID ASSESSMENT & FOCUS GROUPS

Objective: explore methods for gathering and documenting

Required Reading: Schensul et al, "Focused Group Interviews" in ECourseware

(Suggested: Beebe, "Rapid Assessment Process: To RAP or not to RAP")

WEEK 8 (10/18) FALL BREAK – CLASSES DO NOT MEET

WEEK 9 (10/25) UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS (guest Dr. Linda Bennett)

Objective: examine strategies for collecting in-depth, open-ended narrative data from individuals and groups

Required Reading: Bernard, Chapter 8

(Suggested: Strauss, “Analyzing Discourse for Cultural Complexity”)

***ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Project 3 - Ethnographic Map**

WEEK 10 (11/1) SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Objective: explore free-lists, pile sorts, triads/paired comparisons and other methods to elicit cultural domains

Required Reading: Bernard, Chapter 10

(Suggested: Weller, “Structured Interviewing and Questionnaire Construction”)

WEEK 11 (11/8) STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS & SURVEYS (guest Dr. Charles Williams)

Objective: learn techniques for constructing effective questionnaires and for maximizing responses rates

Required Reading: Bernard, Chapters 9 and 11

(Suggested: Presser, et al, “Methods for Testing and Evaluating Survey Questions” at:

<http://poq.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/68/1/109>)

***ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Project 4, Unstructured Interview**

WEEK 12 (11/15) PAR AND ENGAGED RESEARCH (guest Dr. Stan Hyland)

Objective: appreciate the role of collaboration in research planning, implementation, and outcomes

Required Reading: Schensul et al, “Building Research Partnerships” in ECourseware

(Suggested: CBPR curriculum at <http://www.cbprcurriculum.info/>; Natari & Berg, “Using Ethnography to Strengthen and Evaluate Intervention Programs”)

WEEK 13 (11/22) FIELD NOTES (guest Dr. Lambert-Pennington)

Objective: weigh techniques for recording information and preparing data sets for analysis

Required Reading: Bernard, Chapter 13

(Suggested: Emerson, Fretz, Shaw, “Participant Observation & Fieldnotes”)

***ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Project 5, Structured Survey**

WEEK 14 (11/29) SYSTEMATIC QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS (guest Dr. Ross Sackett)

Objective: explore formal techniques for the analysis and interpretation of cultural “texts”

Required Reading: Bernard, Chapters 15 and 18

(Suggested: Bernard, Ch. 19)

WEEK 15 (12/6) BASIC CODING & CODEBOOKS (guest Dr. Ross Sackett)

Objective: learn techniques for the analysis of cultural domains

Required Reading: no readings – complete exam

(Suggested: Bernard, Chs. 16 and 17)

***ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Written Examination**

WEEK 16 (12/13) ORAL PRESENTATIONS OF TEAM RESEARCH PROPOSALS

ASSIGNMENT DUE TODAY: Team Research Proposals and Self-Evaluations