

Fall 2015
English 4602: Advanced Composition [ONLINE]
Instructor: Dr. Will Duffy

Course Description:

This course will focus on one particular essayistic genre that occurs across many of the disciplines that comprise both the humanities and the social sciences: the ethnographic essay. As Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater explain, ethnographers “study the customs of groups of people in the spaces they inhabit” (2). In short, ethnographers are interested in culture, the “invisible web of behaviors, patterns, rules, and rituals of a group of people who have contact with one another and share a common language” (3). What makes ethnographic essays so invigorating is that they require authors to draw on a variety of writing conventions such as description, narration, and analysis. Moreover ethnographers draw from a variety of research methodologies, including direct observation, interviewing, and library research. While this course presupposes that students have demonstrated competence in academic writing, including how to navigate Internet and library-based research, this course will be most appealing to anyone who is interested in expanding their understandings of academic style and research. Students in this course will select a “culture” to observe, study the art of fieldwork, and compose a variety of shorter essays that at the end of the course will be synthesized into a formal ethnographic essay.

Required Text:

Sunstein, Bonnie Stone and Elizabeth Chiser-Strater. *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research*. Fourth Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012.