

**Anthropology 3PO3 – Doing Ethnography:
Winter 2020
Wednesdays 8:30 – 11:30
MDCL 1010**

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Plett
Email: plettra@mcmaster.ca
Office Hours: Fridays 1:00 – 2:00; CNH 515

Overview and Objectives:

In this course we will provide an introduction to ethnographic fieldwork – the fundamental research method of cultural anthropology. The course will offer students the opportunity to explore the practical, theoretical, and ethical issues of participant-observation fieldwork through readings, lectures, in-class activities, discussion, and films, and have the opportunity to build these methodological skills by completing an ethnographic project in conjunction with CityLAB Hamilton.

Required texts:

All course materials can either be downloaded from McMaster library (articles), as internet resources (hyperlinks provided in the syllabus and on avenue under “links”), or, as indicated in the course schedule, found on Avenue (book chapters).

Learning Assessments:

Your grade will be evaluated based on the following:

Participation (Ongoing)	20%
Research Outline (Feb. 26)	15%
Fieldwork Reflection (Apr 8)	20%
In-Class Observation Activity (Jan 29)	10%
Ethnographic Project (End of Term)	35%

- Your participation grade will be based on attendance in lecture and participation in discussion and in-class activities.
- For the research outline, you will organize and propose a plan of research for your ethnographic project based on the methods you think will be most useful to answer your research question. Project details will be provided during the first class. This outline should be ~1000 words and is due February 26th.

- The Fieldwork reflection is a reflective written piece on the experience of fieldwork, and how your own experience relates to issues, dilemmas, theory, or arguments raised in lecture and in the readings. This is not an ethnography, a set of fieldnotes, or a research paper, but a personal reflection on the process of ethnographic research itself. This will be a 5-7 page paper, due after class ends on April 8th.
- The in-class observation activity will take place in class on Jan. 26th, and no preparation or work outside of class is necessary!
- The major ethnographic project has the most weight. We are partnering with the City of Hamilton and CityLAB to work on an ethnographic project related to accessibility and health. You will employ your freshly learned skills in anthropological methods to answer a research question that you will write up as an ethnography, and present the findings as practical research for the City of Hamilton. A detailed description of the projects and how we will undertake them will be discussed during our first lecture, and the information will be posted on Avenue.

Please hand in the research outline and ethnography as a hard copy at the beginning of class on the day it is due.

The Fieldwork Reflection can be submitted via DropBox on Avenue by noon on April 8th.

Papers submitted via the Avenue to Learn dropbox will be evaluated for originality using Turnitin.com.

Late papers without acceptable documentation will not be accepted. There will be one point deducted for each day late for written assignments unless the student has MSAF or Faculty Office Documentation, except in the case of those with SAS accommodation

Topic and Reading Schedule

January 8: Introduction

January 15: What is Ethnography?

Read: Boas, Franz 1920 The Methods of Ethnology *American Anthropologist* 22(4): 311-321.

Lassiter, Luke Eric 2008 Collaborative Anthropology Matters *Anthropology News* 47(5): 20-21

January 22: Participant Observation

Read: Schuchat, Molly G. 1989 On Participant Observation *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly* 14(1): 31-33.

Ch. 6: "Participant Observation" in Murchison *Ethnography Essentials*

January 29: In-Class Observational Activity

February 5: Doing Fieldwork – Research Design and Ethics

Read: Chs. 3 and 4: "Research Design" and "Writing a Proposal" in Murchison *Ethnography Essentials*

The [AAA Code of Ethics](#)

February 12: Doing Fieldwork – Access, Talking, Listening, Interviewing

Read: Ch. 9: "Interviews: Unstructured and Semi-structured" in Bernard *Research Methods in Anthropology*

February 19: ~~ READING WEEK ~~

February 26: Doing Fieldwork – Note-Taking and Recording Data

Read: Ch. 14: "Field Notes: How to Take Them, Code Them, Manage Them" in Bernard *Research Methods in Anthropology*

Research Outline Due

March 4: Doing Ethnography – From Observations to Theory

Read: Ch. 13: "Answering Questions and Building Models" in Murchison *Ethnography Essentials*

March 11: The Process of Analysis

Read: Ch. 8: "The Process of Analysis" in Hammersley and Atkinson *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*

March 18: Issues and Dilemmas in Fieldwork

Read: Scheper-Hughes, Nancy 2000 Ire in Ireland *Ethnography* 1(1): 117-140.

Peruse the AAA [Ethics Briefing Papers](#)

March 25: Writing Ethnography - Workshop

April 1: Writing Ethnography - Workshop

April 8: Fieldwork Reflection Due on Avenue

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Course guidelines

1. Late policy:

Please **contact me** if you are unable to submit an assignment on time. I am generally willing to negotiate assignment deadlines in extenuating circumstances. However, based on the due date of the assignment, **if you do not contact me in advance, late assignments will not be graded.**

2. Email:

Please ask detailed questions about course material and assignments in person. Please contact me through McMaster mail with matters pertaining to class.

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html> *Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

3. Laptop Policy:

Please be respectful of the instructor and your classmates, and do not engage in non-class-related activities on your computer.

You will be asked to cease laptop use if it is apparent that your computer is a source of distraction.

University Policies

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own for which other credit has been obtained. (*Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide*)

2. Improper collaboration in group work. (*Insert specific course information*)
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.
(*If applicable*) In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

MSAF

- The MSAF should be used for medical and non-medical (personal) situations.
- Approval of the MSAF is automatic (i.e. no documentation required)
- Rules governing the MSAF are as follows:
 - The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid has been reduced from 5 days to 3 days.
 - The upper limit for when an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from 'less than 30%' to 'less than 25%' of the course weight.
 - The 'one MSAF per term' limit is retained.
 - As per the policy, an automated email will be sent to the course instructor, who will determine the appropriate relief. Students must immediately follow up with their instructors. Failure to do so may negate their relief.
- Policy: The MSAF policy can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar under General Academic Regulations > Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work or here: http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS, AND SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student's religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please review the RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences about how to request accommodation.

PRIVACY PROTECTION

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

AODA

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact Eszter Bell at 905-525-9140 extension 24423 or email bellesz@mcmaster.ca