

COURSE SYLLABUS
Anthropology 3P03
Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology
Winter 2017 – Tues. 8:30 a.m. - 11:20 p.m. LRW 1056
Dr. Ellen Badone UH 130 badone@mcmaster.ca (905)525-9140 x23395
Office Hours: Mon. 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. UH 130

Objectives and Overview:

This course provides an introduction to the technique of participant-observation ethnographic fieldwork in cultural anthropology. By the end of the semester, students will be familiar with the history of this technique and with the way it is currently practiced. Through readings, lectures and digital resources, the course will present students with the opportunity to consider the ethical, philosophical and practical issues faced by cultural anthropologists doing field research. Students will also design, carry out and write their own “mini-ethnographies.” Students who are from fields other than anthropology that employ ethnographic methods are welcome to take the course, with instructor’s permission.

Required Texts: *Ethnography Essentials: Designing, Conducting and Presenting Your Research.* Julian M. Murchison. John Wiley and Sons, 2010.

On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City. Alice Goffman. Picador, 2015.

Assessment:

Grades will be determined on the following basis:

Reading Commentaries	40%
Discussion Participation	20%
Mini-Ethnography	40%: proposal 10%, short presentation 5%, final ethnography 25%

Every student will be responsible for reading all the assigned weekly readings and for preparing a two page (typed, 12 point font, 1” margins, double-spaced) commentary on the readings listed in the syllabus every week. For each book chapter, the commentary should summarize the author’s argument and formulate a critique, comment or question to be raised during seminar discussion. Your two page commentary should deal with all the readings for the week.

Commentaries are due in class each week and will be graded out of 10 and handed back the following week. Discussion participation will also be graded out of 10 each week. Since the rationale for preparing the commentaries is to prepare you for participation in class discussion, papers will **NOT BE ACCEPTED** after the end of class without MSAF or Faculty of Social Sciences documentation, except in the case of students with SAS accommodations, who should see Dr. Badone as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester. If you are absent without MSAF or Faculty of Social Sciences documentation, you will receive a grade of zero on discussion participation for that class. If you are absent with MSAF or Faculty of Social Sciences documentation, you will receive a grade of 5 out of 10 for participation. In fairness to

people who make the deadlines, 10% will be deducted for each day late for mini-ethnography proposals and final ethnographies that are handed in after the due date, except in the case of MSAF, Faculty of Social Sciences or SAS documentation.

Weekly Schedule of Lectures, Readings and AV Materials

- January 10: **Introduction**
Fieldwork in Brittany, France

Alice Goffman TED talk

In Class Activity: Brainstorm Ideas for Mini-Ethnography
- January 17: **Choosing a Topic, Research Design and Ethics**

Commentary/Discussion: chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 in *Ethnography Essentials*

In Class Activities: Visit McMaster Research Ethics Board Website
<http://reo.mcmaster.ca> for information on ethics review procedures for research at McMaster

Complete Modules of the TCPS2 CORE training program
- January 24: **The Basics of Fieldwork**

Commentary/Discussion: chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 in *Ethnography Essentials*

In Class Activity: Proposal Trouble-Shooting
- January 31: **Participant-Observation**

Proposal Due

Film: *13th*
- February 7: **Talking, Listening and Note-taking**

Commentary/Discussion: chapters 9, 10, 11 in *Ethnography Essentials*

Proposal Returned for Revision

In Class Activity: One-on-One Proposal Feedback

- February 14: **Dilemmas and Positioning in Fieldwork**
- Commentary/Discussion:* “Appendix: A Methodological Note” in *On the Run*
- Revised Proposal Due*
- February 28: **Doing Ethnography**
- Commentary/Discussion:* Prologue, Preface, Introduction, chapters 1, 2 in *On the Run*
- In Class Activity: Issues Arising in Fieldwork for Mini-Ethnography
- March 7: **Participant-Observation**
- Commentary/Discussion:* chapters 3, 4, 5 in *On the Run*
- In Class Activity: Writing Fieldnotes
- March 14: **Analysis**
- Commentary/Discussion:* chapters 6, 7, Conclusion, Epilogue in *On the Run*
- In Class Activity: Looking for Themes in Your Fieldnotes
- March 21: **Beginning to Write**
- Commentary/Discussion:* Chapters 12, 13, 14, 15 in *Ethnography Essentials*
- In Class Activity: From Observations to Theory
- March 28: **Completing the Ethnography**
- Commentary/Discussion:* “The Changeling,” by Gideon Lewis-Kraus. *New York Times Magazine*, January 17, 2016.
- In Class Activity: Sharing Drafts – Writing Workshop

April 4: **Short Presentation and Mini-Ethnography Due (submit hard copy in class and electronic copy to Turnitin.com)**

In Class Activity: **Mini-Ethnography Short Presentations**

MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose your site. Pick a social setting that interests you. Possible fieldwork sites include: activities in the David Braley Centre, clubs on campus, sports events (live or watching on TV in a group setting), a café, a nightclub, a workplace (could be where you work), a department on campus, Mills Library, MUSC. Do preliminary visits to assess the feasibility of fieldwork at your site. Please do not pick a site that would involve observing or interviewing people under 18 or people who lack the capacity to consent to participation in a research project.
2. Choose a research theme to investigate. Your theme could be something like: gender differences in use of space and social roles, power relationships and social hierarchy, how people understand their experience as meaningful, construction of group identity, shared ideals and values. The theme you choose should be one that is practical to investigate at your chosen site.
3. Prepare a fieldwork proposal. List the site and research theme you have chosen. Write a 500 word summary of the research you hope to carry out and how you plan to do it. The summary should be followed by a list of three published works by cultural anthropologists (books or journal articles) that relate to your topic. Using the samples available on Avenue to Learn and the McMaster Research Ethics Board website, prepare a recruitment poster, email recruitment script, oral recruitment script, letter of information and consent and interview question list. Fill out an Individual Application To Involve Human Participants in Research form. All of these materials are part of your proposal.
4. Hand in proposal, do any requested revisions, and get it approved by Dr. Badone
5. Take proposal to someone in a position of authority at your fieldwork site to ask permission to carry out the mini-ethnography.
6. Once you have received permission, begin participant-observation fieldwork. Visit the site for at least one hour on at least three occasions. Talk to people informally and participate in activities at the site. Using your recruitment poster and oral script, recruit five people for interviews. You can leave copies of the recruitment poster at the site so that people interested in being interviewed can contact you. Use your email recruitment script to contact people who you are unable to meet during participant-observation sessions at the site, and ask them if they would be willing to meet with you for an interview. Make two copies of your letter of information and consent for each interview that you carry out: one copy should be signed and returned to you; the other is for the participant to keep.

7. After each participant-observation session, write fieldnotes about what goes on at the site, people you encountered and conversations you had, as well as activities in which you participated. Pay special attention to details that relate to your theme of investigation, but make sure you get a holistic overview of the site. Check in with Dr. Badone weekly in class, office hours or by email to discuss any problems arising during fieldwork.
8. Interview five participants. Use your list of interview questions as a guide, but allow participants to talk about issues that are important to them, even if these issues are not on your interview guide. Interviews should be open-ended and informal. Plan to talk to each participant for approximately 30 minutes, but be prepared for the interview to be longer or shorter. At the beginning of your interviews, provide participants with your Letter of Information and Consent. Ask participants to sign the consent form. Ask them if it is OK for you to take notes or to tape record the interview. Remind them at the start of the interview that they are free to withdraw (stop participating in the interview) at any point, and that they do not need to answer any question that they do not want to answer. Remind them that if they decide to withdraw, they can decide whether or not you will be able to use the data they have provided. Be sensitive during the interview to your participant's reactions. If a participant seems upset or uncomfortable, ask them if they wish to skip the question, talk about another topic, or withdraw from the interview. At the end of the interview, make sure to thank your participant, and ask them if they would like to receive a summary of your ethnography. If so, ask them to provide you with their contact information (email address, snail mail address)
9. Make sure that your fieldnotes, tape-recordings and transcribed interviews are securely stored on a password protected computer. Hard copy fieldnotes and USB drives should be kept in a locked desk drawer or storage container. All electronic and hard copy data should be destroyed at the end of the semester (by May 15, 2017) after you have handed in your mini-ethnography.
10. Transcribe interviews and do in-depth fieldnotes based on your notes taken during the interview.
11. Read through your fieldnotes and transcribed interviews to look for themes. Organize your material according to themes.
12. Drawing on the three published sources listed in your proposal plus two additional sources relating to your topic of research, develop a "thesis" or argument for your ethnography. Use your data from fieldnotes and interviews to support your argument.
13. Write your mini-ethnography. It should consist of three sections. The first should be an introduction that describes the ethnographic setting, states your theme of research and thesis, and reviews relevant literature from other anthropological sources. The second section should present the evidence that you have found through fieldwork to support your thesis. The concluding section should summarize your findings, state the limitations of your research and indicate how it relates to other anthropological works on your topic. Do your

findings confirm, correlate with, or differ from, other researchers' work? The mini-ethnography should be approximately 7-10 pages in length, typed and double spaced (12 point font, 1" margins). Provide a 500 word "executive summary" of your report that can be circulated to interested participants **after** you receive your grade on the assignment and feedback from Dr. Badone.

14. Using your executive summary, prepare a five minute power point presentation about your fieldwork to share with the class on April 4. Email your presentation to Dr. Badone by 5 p.m. on April 3, so that all presentations can be merged for smooth transitions.
15. Hand in a hard copy of your mini-ethnography, and submit an electronic copy through Turnitin.com.
16. Grades and comments on the mini-ethnographies will be available after April 21, 2017. Dr. Badone will schedule special office hours for pick-up of the assignments.
17. If necessary, revise your executive summary after receiving comments from Dr. Badone.
18. Circulate the executive summary to interested participants via email or in hard copy.

SUBMITTING BOOK REVIEW TO TURNITIN.COM

Class ID: 14171076 Password: ethnography

Instruction page for turnitin:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/turnitin/students/howto.html>

All work that students submit must be their own work (original) and include proper citations when work is copied or paraphrased (see section on plagiarism). Instructors and TAs have always employed various methods for detecting plagiarism. With the advent of the Internet and the corresponding explosion of available material for students, it has become time-consuming to employ the older detection methods.

McMaster University has purchased Turnitin.com, which is a detection service. Students submit their assignment/work electronically to Turnitin.com where it is checked against the internet, published works and Turnitin's database for similar or identical work. If Turnitin finds similar or identical work that has not been properly cited, a report is sent to the instructor showing the student's work and the original source. The instructor reviews what Turnitin has found and then determines if he/she thinks there is a problem with the work.

How to submit work to Turnitin.com

Go to www.turnitin.com

Click create account, then create a user profile and follow the instructions.

Use the class ID and class enrollment password (above). When you submit your assignment, print out and keep the digital receipt.

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.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

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.

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

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
(Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)

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

AODA

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact Delia Hutchinson at 905-525-9140 extension 24523 or email hutchin@mcmaster.ca