

221.23 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH (3 cr.)
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Providence College
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Special Note to Students

It is your responsibility to retain course outlines for possible future use to support applications for transfer of credit to other educational institutions.

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will familiarize students with the background, ethics and practice of ethnographic research, including work in the field, interviewing, and reporting. The research will be done in pairs or whatever other small group size is appropriate to the number of students in the class.

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- a: understand the background that has led to modern ethnographic research.
- b: see how the ethics of such research have evolved.
- c: compare the uniqueness of ethnographic research to some other scientific methods.
- d: learn and practice a variety of specific ethnographic research skills.

C. TEXTS REQUIRED

Berg, Bruce L. 2000. Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon

Additional Text and reader with selected research readings TBA.

D. FOR COMPARISON- in the library or on reserve in the library

Bernard, H. Russell. 2006. Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Oxford: AltaMira Press.

Fetterman, David M. 1989. Ethnography Step by Step. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Gay, L, R. 1987. Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application. Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing.

Neuman, W. Lawrence. 1991. Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Salkind, Neil J. 1994. Exploring Research. Don Mills ON: Macmillan College Publishing Company.

Spradley, James P. 1979. The Ethnographic Interview. Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

_____. 1980. Participant Observation. Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

****. 2006. "Protecting Research Confidentiality. Canadian Journal of Law and Society 21:1, 163-185.

E. INFORMATION OF INTEREST ON INTERNET-

Internet Archive <http://www.archive.org/index.php>
Human Relations Area Files <http://www.yale.edu/hraf/index.html>
The Ethnograph <http://www.qualisresearch.com/default.htm>
A research ethics issue <http://www.agentorangealert.com>

F. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to read the relevant material for each lecture and to come to class prepared to ask specific questions and discuss intelligently.

The main assignment for this course will be to prepare an ethnography (or partial ethnography) of a significant local social setting. The choice of setting will be made in collaboration with the professor (and one's research partner if applicable). Research and writing for the main project could be done individually, in very small groups, preferably pairs, or as a whole group if the class is small. The pairing (if applicable) and choice of social setting for study will be finalized in the second week of semester, and discussion and reporting on the progress of the projects will be done on a weekly basis thereafter in class. In the **third week** of class each researcher (or pair) will submit a **written research proposal** (roughly 2 pages) for **5%** of the final mark. A full written report will be due close to the end of the semester and should have the research proposal (s) attached for comparison. Around the same time as the final paper is handed in, the researchers (individual, pairs or group) will make oral reports of their projects to the class as a whole. For this class report, whatever audio-visual aids are available (such as photos or video of the project) can be used. **Oral reports** by each research pair are due **as scheduled**. **10%** of final mark. The **written project report** (done with your research partner or as a group as applicable) should be about 10-20 pages long. **20%** of final mark. **Due April 16.**

Regularly throughout the semester each student is expected make entries in a personal **journal** of activities relevant to the course and its research. This is the emic or subjective element in research, something that anthropologists are careful to keep track of. This can be very informal in style, but should include date for each entry. Submit individually on April 16. **5%** of final mark.

During the semester, as the qualitative research project is progressing, a series of smaller projects will be completed to learn background information in specific areas of relevance to this research.

A: The ethics of qualitative research and writing. Each student will find at least two documents explaining the ethics of a specific discipline related to qualitative research, compare and contrast those documents, make notes on their observations, and bring those notes to class for a discussion on the subject of ethics in qualitative research. Subsequent to the discussion, each student researcher will make a one page list of what they consider to be the most important points of ethics in research, with a brief explanation for each of the points listed. Notes are due for discussion on **Mar. 16** for **5%** of final mark. The final list is due exactly one week, **Mar. 23** later for **5%** of final mark.

B: Ethnography. Each student will read and report on two ethnographic studies during the semester. The reports should answer such questions as why the authors did their study, what methods they used, what they found, and the strengths and weaknesses of their findings. Students will choose from a short list of possible studies and be prepared to help lead discussion in class on the dates when their specific studies are due. Students who are not presenting on a specific study are expected to listen attentively and ask intelligent questions so that everyone can learn from the exercise. The reports are **due as scheduled** and worth a total of **20%** of the final mark (**10% each**).

C: Each student is expected to explore the Human Relations Area Files website in detail and to report on the potential usefulness of what they have found. This **report is due on Apr. 6** for 5% of the final mark.

The **mid term** and **final exams** will **each be worth 10%** of the course mark for a total of 20%. Class **participation** will be evaluated for **5%** of the final mark.

F. COURSE POLICIES

- a: Class Attendance Students are expected to be in class in order to benefit from lectures and discussion. You will lose participation marks if you miss classes, and you will be at a disadvantage come exam time because the mid term and final are based on the class lectures.
- b: Manuscript Preparation Please use a computer (or typewriter) and double space your text, using one inch margins and a standard sized font. You can use either the APA system or Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. Be consistent.
- c: Research Integrity I expect you to do research honestly. That means, among other things, to not steal other's ideas. Of course we all learn from one another, and I want to encourage cooperation rather than competition, but to use someone else's ideas without properly giving credit is intellectual theft. If you use another's ideas give appropriate credit for them. And, please, also try to have some ideas of your own. But if you steal another's ideas and present them as your own, you risk getting 0% for your paper.

In your writing you may have to criticize another. People do not always agree, and sometimes must disagree strongly to defend what we consider a vital matter of fact or point of truth. If you disagree, avoid the temptation to misrepresent your opponent. Try to so faithfully represent his or her position that if they read your criticism they would see their ideas properly presented, not twisted out of shape.

Please do not pad your papers with unnecessary verbiage. I value clarity of thought and brevity over volume.

For further information check the academic policy statement in the student handbook.

d: ICTs in Class. Student use of information and communication technologies for purposes other than class note-taking is not allowed in the classroom, as students are expected to give their total attention to class activities. Use of cell-phones or ipods is never appropriate in the classroom, and use of laptop computers to play games, chat with others, browse the internet, or engage material not related to the class is always distracting to classmates and disrespectful to the instructor. Unlike some other post-secondary institutions, Providence has not yet found it necessary to ban laptops from the classroom, or prevent wireless internet access in classrooms. Only judicious use of them will keep it that way.

e: Late Assignments Unless there are unusual and convincing reasons, backed by a written document from your doctor or residence director, late assignments will be penalized at 3 % per day up to a maximum of 7 days. After one week no late assignments will be accepted.

f. <u>Grading</u>	Excellent	A+	4.0	93-100
		A		85-92
		A-		80-84
	Very Good	B+	3.5	77-79
	Good	B	3.0	73-76
		B-		70-72
	Satisfactory	C+	2.5	67-69
	Adequate	C	2.0	63-66
		C-		60-62
	Marginal	D+	1.0	57-59
		D		53-56
		D-		50-52
	Failure	F	0.0	<50

I will evaluate both what you write (content) and how you write it (style).

f. Proposed Class Schedule

- 1st wk – Jan. 12 -Introduction and a brief history (B. ch. 1,2)
-Outline of the areas of research to be covered in the course
-Thinking Anthropologically
-Partners and possible subjects for study (initial discussion)
- 2nd wk –Jan. 19 Archival Research and Historiography (B. ch. 8,9)
-Partners and possible subjects for study (final decisions)
-discussion of strategies for research
- 3rd wk- Jan. Feb. 2 -Action Research (B. ch. 7)
-Written **proposal** due.
- 4th wk – Feb. 9.- Interviewing (B. ch. 4,5)
-Written Field work proposal- gp. cooperation & site determined- 1-2 pages
-Qualitative Research reports #1
- 5th wk – Feb. 16 –Ethnographic Interviews, Participant Obs. & Ethnography (B. ch. 6)
-Qualitative Research reports #2
- 6th wk – Feb. 23 -Qualitative Research reports #3
- **Mid Term Exam.**
- 7th wk – Mar. 9 –Ethnographic Analysis & Text Comparison-Introduction & Discussion
(B. ch. 11)
-Qualitative Research reports #4
- 8th wk – Mar. 16. -Ethics and field research (B. ch. 3)
-**Notes on ethics statements due** Interviewing cont'd
- 9th wk – Mar. 23 -Discussion of ethics- **list of ethics statements due.**
-Exploring the Ethnograph (bring laptops to class if possible)
- 10th wk – Mar. 30 –Ethics continued
- 11th wk – Apr. 6. Human Relations Area Files (bring laptops to class if possible)
-assignment due on **Human Relations Area Files.**
-Qualitative Research reports #5
- 12th wk – Apr. 13 -Research reports
-Qualitative Research reports #6
-**Apr. 16** final report and journals due.