Many people come to a point in the research and analysis process—whether in choosing the topic, formulating research questions, finding interviewees, planning focus groups, coding or finding themes, and making a theme map—where they feel puzzled. Please contact me when that happens to you. In fact, I hope that everyone in class comes to my office to speak with me individually sometime during the term.

**Objectives and Outcomes:**
- To grapple with the paradigmatic assumptions and ethical issues surrounding ethnographic fieldwork and qualitative research.
- To learn how to do ethnographic fieldwork by applying it in the field, analyzing and interpreting the data, and communicating results in writing and speech.
- To reflect on the process of engagement and interpretation in ethnographic fieldwork.
- To practice a group approach to helping each other think through the purpose and process of your research.
- All of the above will be measured by short quizzes, class discussions and portfolio building throughout the term with emphasis on the interviews, data, coding, analysis, interpretation, and writing in the main project of qualitative research.

**Textbooks:**

**PLAN for the course:** In this course you will learn about ethnographic or qualitative methods by doing it—planning your topic, sample, and methods; collecting your data; interpreting and analyzing it; and writing it up in appealing, readable form and giving a presentation on it. We will also be reading about doing research. The readings will suggest methods of sampling, data collection, and analysis that you won’t necessarily use in this course, but they will be useful to you to think about and refer to in the future. We will also be reading and reflecting on the meaning of ethnographic fieldwork in anthropology, as it has developed and how it is changing. The ethics of research will be an ongoing consideration.

Take responsibility for the products due in the various stages of the research process. I will not collect everything when it is due, but you will be sharing it with your group in class. At the end of the course you need to hand in a portfolio that includes products of all
the stages of the fieldwork process, along with the final written paper and presentation. We will often share our work-in-progress with others in the class for peer feedback. Come to class with readings done, ready for in-class writings, discussions, and a few quizzes on key concepts.

**Week 1:**
**Tues, Jan 9:** Introduction—Rosenberger’s experiences and some basic epistemological approaches in ethnography.

**Thurs, Jan 11: Read for today: Bernard: Chap 1: pp. 1-6, 15-27 and Chap 3 (all) (Positivism and Humanism; Preparing for Research)**

Start to think about what topic you are going to focus on in your research project for this class. Consider the questions that Bernard raises, especially on p. 70. What is the larger theoretical question that your data will contribute to answering? What question do you want to answer within that larger question? What ethics are potentially involved?

Consider IRB application necessary if you are taping and/or you will be using this material for publication, as in a thesis. Consult with me on this.

**Week 2:**
**Tues, Jan 16: Read for today: Bernard: Chapters 2 and 6 (Foundations of Social Research and Sampling)**

We will have a short quiz on main concepts in Chapters 2 and 6. Start to think about your topic in terms of sample: the appropriate people to interview for this very small sample, and also the best sample in a larger version of this project. What would be the best way to determine that sample? Think about what the independent and dependent variables are in your research question.

**Thurs, Jan 18: Read Bernard: Chapter 8 (Sampling and Informants)**

Share your ideas and struggles concerning your topic—choice of setting or phenomenon of interest as well as your choice of population from which to interview for your study this term. Think about your choices of topic as far as significance or value, usefulness, personal interest, prior knowledge, need, etc. Think about what research questions you will be trying to answer—at the more general and more specific level. How will your sample fit with these questions? What would be your strategy for finding representative people from your population to interview or for finding events or situations to observe? Encourage and challenge each other on the do-ability, want-to-do-ability and should-do-ability of each study.

**Week 3:**
**Tues, Jan 23: Read Bernard, Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 to p. 265 (Interviewing)**

Due: Write up your choice of topic and defend it. Write the research questions that you hope to answer—1-2 general questions and 3-4 sub-questions. Write up your intended choice of sample, why, and how to access it. I will collect this. (Portfolio)

**Thurs, Jan 25: Read Bernard, Chapter 10, p. 265 to end of Chapter 11 (Interviewing)** Discussion of interviewing.
Week 4:

Tues, Jan 30: Read Bernard, Chapter 13 (Participant Observation)

Two references and two summaries of articles or book chapters relevant to your topic due. (See above)

Share with your group specific questions with probes or follow-up questions that you may use for interviews. These will change but develop these quite specifically at this stage so you know what you want to find out. You can change them later if they are not appropriate. What other techniques might you use? Challenge each other and improve. (Portfolio)

[Note: Professor needs to check your questionnaire and give you feedback—preferably after you have finalized it (after pilot interview) and before you do your 3 formal interviews.]

Thurs, Feb 1: Read Bernard Chapter 14 (Field Notes)

Discussion of Field Notes.

Discuss the various possibilities for a triangulation activity with group. This is designed to increase the validity of your study. I recommend that you do a focus group with a broader group of people like your interviewees or a contrastive group.

Alternatively, you could do an in-depth participant observation or a short survey with a broader group of people. Consider questions for focus group or survey, and style of observation and analysis for participant observation. (Portfolio)

Week 5:

Tues, Feb 6: Chapter 1 in Gupta and Ferguson (Discipline and Practice), p. 1-40

Results of pilot interview or focus group due with fieldnotes.

Write up main points of pilot interview and summarize: What did you learn about the population, setting or phenomenon in general? What did you learn that influenced the general research questions and the specific questions you should ask? What did you learn that helps you to determine what interviewees might best represent the population, setting or phenomenon? Share in class. (Portfolio)

Fieldnotes: What did you observe during the interview? What were your reactions during the interview? What did you perceive as the reactions of the interviewee? Reflect on your own pre-conceived notions and questions that you are bringing to this study. How will you influence the study and interact with the people involved? (Portfolio)

Thurs, Feb 8: Wolcott: pages 1-62 (this is easier reading)

Share with your group: your revised and detailed research plan including topic, purpose, research questions, population, setting if relevant, types of people to be represented in interviews, plan for gaining access and permission, detailed questionnaire with follow-up questions. (Portfolio, typed neatly)
Week 6:
**Tues, Feb 13:** Read Bernard: Chapter 16 and Chapter 17 (Qualitative Analysis)
Discussion and practice of coding and themes in class.

**Thurs, Feb 15:** Read Wolcott, pp. 63-154
Discussion and practice of coding and themes in class.

Week 7:
**Tues, Feb 20:** Read Bernard: Chapter 18 (Qualitative Analysis II)
Discussion of NVivo in class
Hand in detailed, written plan for triangulation activity including any questionnaires or other material, and plans to achieve it. *(Portfolio, typed neatly)*

**Thurs, Feb 22:** Chap 8 in Gupta and Ferguson (You can’t take the subway to the field)
Throughout weeks 7-9 we will be sharing interview experiences of you and the interviewees, reflexive memos, analytic memos, technical problems, and so on with others in the class—listening and offering advice to each other. Reflect on the process of fieldwork. Raise any ethical questions you have at anytime. Use this time also to brainstorm on what follow-up questions you need to ask your interviewees. Are you getting a sense of where the data is taking you? What categories or themes are emerging?

Week 8:
**Tues, Feb 27:** Read Chapter 7 in Gupta and Ferguson (Anthropology and the Cultural Study of Science)
You should be transcribing your interviews and coding them.
Discussion of surveys and survey questions and how to compose them.

**Thurs, March 1:** Read Chapter 4 in Gupta and Ferguson (News and Culture)
Try to have your triangulation activity done by this time. What have you learned from this additional activity?
Work on potential survey questions for follow-up survey on your topic.

Week 9:
**Tues, Mar 6:** Read Chapter 10 in Gupta and Ferguson(Spatial Practices)
You should have your interviews done by this point, and your themes should be emerging. We will be talking about particular themes as they emerge in class. If people are having trouble (as many people do), we can work on themes in class together and/or the professor will help you work on themes. Remember you may not be able to use every potential theme. You may have to pick the most important ones. Don’t be afraid of
contradictions in your data or among people. **Results of triangulation focus group or in-depth participant observation due.**

**Thurs, Mar 8: Read Wolcott: 155-222; 241-252**

Share your potential themes with class members. Organize quotes and observations from all sources that support the themes. Make a “map” of how the themes you have chosen relate to each other. If possible, make an overarching statement or two that brings all the themes together in some relation—even if there are contradictions. Challenge and defend why these are the best themes. (Portfolio)

**Survey questions due** in easy-to-follow, codable form for follow-up survey

**Week 10:**

**Tues, Mar 13: Presentations:** 10 minutes each: Power Point—emphasize themes and support these with quotes. All fonts used should be 24 or above. Do not crowd the screen.

**Thurs, Mar 15: Presentations**

*(We will have extra presentations on Monday evening of exam week, if necessary.)*

**Portfolios and project papers are due on Tuesday, March 20 by 5.** Put them in the anthro office or under my door. These include all the portfolio exercises as well as the final project write-up. Include everything that you have done, including the transcriptions and the coding.

**Groups:** Groups to help each other through the fieldwork experience will be formed. They will ordinarily consist of 4 people. Groups are not required to meet outside of class.

Respect the power of these groups because it is very helpful to have other people know your project well and be able to give you encouragement, suggestions and criticism. Ethnographic fieldwork and analysis is a somewhat unpredictable process of interaction and interpretation, and thus people often feel insecure about whether they are doing things “correctly” when in fact there are many ways to do them. Your classmates will be valuable people to bounce your ideas off of. Keep in close touch throughout the term. Be willing to give other people’s projects serious consideration and you can receive the same.

Keep an eye on group dynamics. Make sure that someone is generally facilitating and keeping an eye on the time so everyone gets a chance to present his/her material. Have a person who sees the positive things in people’s work and have a person who plays devil’s advocate and pushes people to think farther or more clearly.

If you feel that your group is not working well, please contact me. If you feel that you need advice that your group cannot give, please make an appointment to talk with me. I will be checking in with your group to see how you are doing.
Find two articles or book chapters that are relevant to your topic from academic literature. You might choose articles for various reasons: to find general concepts or explanations that may help you analyze what you are looking at; to find additional, relevant information on what you are studying; to find a comparison case similar to yours; in general to find material that will help you define yourself as part of a field of study. Remember that after you do your study, you may find that your data supports or runs counter in some way to the concepts, explanations, information or experience found in the literature. That’s okay—then you add to information, or you critique what came before.

For this assignment, write complete references for the articles. For each article or chapter write a one-to-two-page summary of (1) what questions or points from the articles/book chapters are relevant to your study and (2) how the article helps you to formulate your research problem and questions. These are due on Jan 30.

Plan a pilot interview to get a sense of what is relevant in this population or situation, to help sharpen the research question, to plan questions that would be of interest and to determine how best to represent the population in your interviewees. The pilot interview should be done with someone whom you think already knows a good deal about this population or field and can help you to develop your research plan. Tell them of your general research interests and ask for their advice. This person can help you to think about what questions would work or should be asked and what kind of people you should be talking with. Pilot interview due on Feb 6: transcript with summary of what you learned.

Weeks 5-8: Interview at least three strategic people about the topic you have chosen and do one follow-up interview with at least one of these people. Ideally the person you do a follow-up with will be a person who has much to offer on the subject, or someone whose first interview left questions or needs expansion. Of course you can follow up with other interviews in person or by email if there are things you don’t understand, etc. Interviews will typically last about 30 minutes, although they may well go longer. Respect the interviewee’s time. Choose a neutral place, or a place where the interviewee feels comfortable. Let the person know of your topic and purpose and obtain their permission. Let them know that they if there is something they don’t want to answer or if there is some information they do not want you to include in your paper, you will respect their wishes. After the interviews are done, you may want to meet with interviewees again to have them help you think about themes and conclusions or recommendations. You should ask interviewees whether they would like to check the transcription of the interview to check for mistakes and to make sure that they are in agreement with it. (If they do not wish to, that is fine.) Please offer to let them see your final write-up, if they wish. Be aware of any documents such as newsletters, archives, newspaper articles, etc. that are relevant to your topic and can contribute to your understanding of the topic.

Plan and conduct a triangulation activity to test the hypotheses, themes, conclusions, or recommendations that have emerged thus far. You can add quickly to your material by
doing a focus group. I recommend this activity when possible—either with a larger group of similar people to your interviewees or a different representative group. You may be deepening your understanding gained in the interviews with another technique such as in-depth interviewing or a short survey distributed more broadly. This will allow you to have some check on the material that you have obtained through the interviews.

**Final presentation** is 10 minutes per person. Visuals such as overheads, hand-outs, power point presentation or posters required. Font size should be around 24. Emphasize research questions, theme section, conclusion section. Other slides on methodology and reflexive sections should be skimmed quickly.

**Portfolio:** Please include in the portfolio all of the 8 assignments marked above on the syllabus as *(Portfolio).* In addition, you need to include all of your transcriptions of pilot interview or focus group, 3 interviews and follow-up interview, and triangulation activity records; field notes of all kinds (reflexive, analytic, etc.) from all of these; coding of all of these; themes with quotes or observations, etc., to support themes; theme map and/or statement.

**Final product** is a narrative write-up of your project with the sections outlined below. Narrative means that it reads like a journal article—in paragraphs and written with a flow whereby you are leading a reader through your paper. Use subtitles as appropriate. Length will vary but I assume 8-12 pages will be necessary.

- **Introduction:** Research topic and research question(s). Also let the reader know why your study is significant—why would the reader want to know about this—why do you?
- **Mini-literature review** using two articles; give main ideas from the articles that are relevant to what you are doing and which will be useful to return to in the conclusion when you discuss them in light of the data/analysis you have done. Ground the central section of the paper in what has emerged in the ethnographic interviews, observations, etc., not in the literature. Return to the literature at the end.
- **Methodology section:**Describe population and sampling techniques, independent and dependent variables or hypotheses if applicable, rationale for qualitative approach, data-gathering methods including triangulation method, main topics of questionnaires or surveys, etc, and description of analytic methods. Your methodology section should enable someone else to replicate your study.
- **Reflexive section:** Reflect on your experience, your influence on the study, their reactions.
- **Limitations** of the study that relate to methods or to your reflexive position, etc.
- **A central section** will discuss the overall ideas that have emerged from your research. Under this you will discuss themes and support them with quotations from interviewees, observations, focus group, and other data you have collected. The quotations will be embedded in the narrative, not listed. Be clear as to which ideas are the interviewees’ opinions and which are yours. You will have several themes and each theme will have several aspects to it that will be illustrated by data. Tie the themes together as you discuss and analyze them, interpreting, exploring contradictions, speculating based on the knowledge you have as to how things are
connected, what power relations, causes, motivations, etc. exist. Be clear as to how the triangulation activity increased or tested the knowledge you had already acquired.

- **Conclusion** with evaluation regarding to what extent the research question was answered. Return to the points raised in the literature review to show how your work has contributed to, expanded, or questioned the points raised in the literature. Develop outcomes such as recommendations or action plans.

- **Bibliography**
- **Addend questionnaires**, surveys, etc.

**Grading:**

- **Portfolio:** 75 points
  - 35 points: 8 Portfolio assignments, including transcripts, fieldnotes, themes, etc.
  - 40 points: Final write-up of project
- **Presentation:** 5 points
- **Participation, discussion, in-class writings, and quiz(zes):** 20 points

**Students with disabilities:** Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Services for Students with Disabilities. Students with accommodations approved through SSD are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through SSD should contact SSD immediately at 737-4098.

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