

## SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

**Discipline: Anthropology**

**Fall 2008**

**ANTH 359Z: Fieldwork Methods in Social Research**

**Upper Division**

**Faculty Name: Dr. Laura Meitzner Yoder**

**Suggested Pre-requisites:** Introductory course in social science or humanities. All students should have had a basic introduction to the field of anthropology/sociology or be prepared to do some additional readings at the course outset.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How do social researchers systematically gather, record, and analyze information on the contexts they study? In this course, students will gain understanding about and experience in conducting social science fieldwork, focusing on tools and skills of ethnography, with reference to other methods commonly used in social research. Readings cover theoretical developments in fieldwork practice, and on ship and in ports students will have continuous and varied opportunities to apply new skills of use in research projects: refining a research topic, creating rapport, observation, interviewing, focus group discussions, questionnaire design, taking and managing fieldnotes, coding, data analysis, and writing, varied applications of social research. The course also covers decisions on selecting and combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, and gain some experience in research design and practical applications of using document analysis and surveys, and issues in sampling. Students are expected to further their understanding of these topics through practice and reflection in small groups throughout the journey. Requirements for evaluation include active participation in class discussions, a journal, analytical summaries of readings, short papers based on field experiences, and class presentations.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Through this course, we will:

- 1) learn about theoretical developments and debates concerning fieldwork in social science;
- 2) discover key technical, ethical, and pragmatic aspects of conducting fieldwork, through reading and personal practice;
- 3) gain experience in cross-cultural research and increase learning from those experiences through individual and small group reflection; and
- 4) build skills in preparing proposals and conducting research projects.

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Day	Topic	Assignments due (see also readings below)	Next port in itinerary
1	<b>Section 1: Orientation to fieldwork experience:</b> Where is the field? Site selection from ethnographic origins to recent trends	Background information sheet (distributed in class)	
2	Establishing rapport, self-introduction, and researcher stance/identity; Defining and focusing your research questions I	Lists of potential field sites for on ship and in port	
3	Observation and participant observation; Taking ethnographic fieldnotes; Gathering and using secondary sources		→Salvador
4	Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Salvador; Self and other	Reflections on observation write-up	
5	Interviewing and focus group discussions; Life histories	Topic proposals due for research proposal/project	
6	From do no harm to action research: Methods, relationships, and the ethical spectrum in social research	Journals #1 due; Interview guide	→Walvis Bay
7	Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Walvis Bay; Comparative research	List of ethical points of consideration from field	→Cape Town
8	Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Cape Town		
9	<b>Section 2: Research project design and tools:</b> Qualitative/Quantitative approaches, mixed methods, and triangulation	Integrating paper #1 due	
10	Surveys and questionnaires	Outline of methodological choices for research proposal	
11	Producing, using and handling statistics; issues of secondary data reliability	Journals #2 due	
12	Participatory rural appraisal (focus on Indian origins and development)		→Chennai
13	Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Chennai	Reflections on research benefits to informants	
14	Sampling		→Penang
15	Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Penang	Outline and justification of scale and/or sampling for research proposal	→Ho Chi Minh
16	<b>Section 3: Organizing a research project from start to finish:</b> Defining and focusing your research questions II; Literature review	Integrating paper #2 due	→Hong Kong, Shanghai
17	Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from China; Research project design	Journals #3 due	→Kobe, Yokohama

18	Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Japan; Do's and Don'ts in proposal writing		
19	Ethics revisited: protection, legality, and sensitive subjects; Human subjects approvals	Outline of ethical protection measures in research proposal	
20	Research management: assistants, budgeting, sequencing activities	Budget and schedule for research proposal	
21	Managing fieldnotes; Coding; Analysis	Journals #4 due	→Honolulu
22	Writing and publishing; Proposal presentations	Integrating paper #3 due	
23	Proposal presentations		→Puntarenas

### Readings

Readings are a combination of short ethnographies, articles, and chapters from texts on research methods. Students will be responsible for giving evidence that they have done the readings and also make attempts to apply them in three ways: 1) one integrating paper of about 400 words based on the readings in each of the three sections, 2) active use of issues raised in readings in class discussions, and 3) fieldnotes making reference to relevant points raised in the readings as they apply to your projects.

### Texts required throughout the course:

Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2002. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Students may use any edition from 3<sup>rd</sup> (1997) to 6<sup>th</sup>.

Spradley, James P., and David W. McCurdy. 1971. *Conformity and conflict: Readings in cultural anthropology*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

### Additional books on Reserve in library:

Olwig, Karen Fog, and Kirsten Hastrup, eds. 1997. *Siting Culture: The Shifting Anthropological Object*. London: Routledge.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Spradley, James P. *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980.

Flick, Uwe. 1998. *Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. 1984. *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*. Sage.

Spradley, James P., and David W. McCurdy. 1972. *The cultural experience: Ethnography in complex society*. Chicago: Science Research Associates.

## Section 1: Orientation to fieldwork experience

### 1. Where is the field? Site selection from ethnographic origins to recent trends

- Clifford, James. 1997. Spatial Practices: Fieldwork, Travel, and the Discipline of Anthropology. In *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds. Pp. 185-222. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Marcus, George. 1995. Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24:95-117. (skim)
- Emerson, Robert. "The Development of Ethnographic Fieldwork." *Contemporary Field Research*. R. Emerson, ed. Prospect Hills, IL: Waveland Press, 2001. Pp. 1-26.

#### Recommended additional reference:

- Olwig, Karen Fog, and Kirsten Hastrup, eds. 1997. *Siting Culture: The Shifting Anthropological Object*. London: Routledge.
- Pratt. "Fieldwork in Common Places" in *Writing Culture*.

### 2. Establishing rapport, self-introduction, and researcher stance/identity; Defining and focusing your research questions I

- Neuman Ch 14: Field Research
- Sherif, Bahira. 2001. "The Ambiguity of Boundaries in the Fieldwork Experience: Establishing Rapport and Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status." *Qualitative Inquiry* 7(4): 436-447.
- Hall, Jr., Edward T., and William Foote Whyte. 1971. "Intercultural communication," in *Conformity and conflict: Readings in cultural anthropology*, edited by Spradley, James P., and David W. McCurdy, pp. 26-41. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Spradley, James P., and David W. McCurdy. 1972. "The Cultural Experience," in *The cultural experience: Ethnography in complex society*, pp. 1-21. Chicago: Science Research Associates.

### 3. Observation and participant observation; Taking ethnographic fieldnotes; Gathering and using secondary sources

- Lee, Richard Borshay. 1971. "Eating Christmas in the Kalahari," in *Conformity and conflict: Readings in cultural anthropology*, edited by Spradley, James P., and David W. McCurdy, pp. 7-14. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Emerson, R., R. Fretz, and L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (excerpts)
- Spradley, James P. *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980. (excerpts)

#### Recommended:

- Conklin, Beth A. 1997. Body Paint, Feathers, and VCRs: Aesthetics and Authenticity in Amazonian Activism. *American Ethnologist* 24:711-37.

### 4. Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Salvador; Self and other

- Neuman Ch 4: The Meanings of Methodology

5. Interviewing and focus group discussions; Life histories
  - Flick, Uwe. 1998. "Semi-structured Interviewing." *Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
  - Flick, Uwe. 1998. "Narratives as Data." *Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
  - Spradley, James P. 1979. Part 1 in *The Ethnographic Interview*, pp. 1-40. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
  
6. From do no harm to action research: Methods, relationships, and the ethical spectrum in social research
  - Faculty module
  - Spradley & McCurdy 1971: Chapters #13, 21, 25
  
7. Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Walvis Bay; Comparative research
  - Hansen, Karen Tranberg. 1994. Dealing With Used Clothing: Salaula and the Construction of Identity in Zambia's Third Republic. *Public Culture* 6:503-523. (skim)
  - Herrmann, Gretchen M. 1997. Gift or Commodity: What Changes Hands in the U.S. Garage Sale? *American Ethnologist* 24:910-30. (skim)
  - Besnier, Niko. 2004. Consumption and Cosmopolitanism: Crafting Selves at the Nuku'alofa Flea Markets. *Anthropological Quarterly* 77:7-45. (skim)
  
8. Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Cape Town
  - Spradley & McCurdy 1971: Chapters 7, 8

## **Section 2: Research project design and tools**

9. Qualitative/Quantitative approaches, mixed methods, and triangulation
  - Neuman Ch 6: Quantitative Research Designs
  - Neuman Ch 7: Quantitative Social Science Measurement (selections)
  - Neuman Ch 13: Qualitative Research Design
  - Marsland, N., I. Wilson, S. Abeyasekera, and U. Kleih. "A Methodological Framework for Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Survey Methods." Social and Economic Development Department, Natural Resources Institute and the Statistical Services Centre, The University of Reading. On internet, address:...
  
10. Surveys and questionnaires
  - Neuman Ch 10: Survey Research
  - Scheuren, Fritz. 2004. What is a Survey. Booklet. On internet, address:...
  
11. Producing, using and handling statistics; issues of secondary data reliability
  - Spradley & McCurdy 1971: Ch 19

12. Participatory rural appraisal (focus on Indian origins and development)
- Poffenberger, Mark, Betsy McGean, Arvind Khare, and Jeff Campbell. 1992. *Field Methods Manual, Volume II: Community Forest Economy and Use Patterns: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Methods in South Gujarat, India*. New Delhi: Society of Promotion for Wastelands Development. On internet: address:...
  - Chambers, Robert. 1993. *Challenging the Professions: Frontiers for rural development*. London: Intermediate Technology. Pp. 1-14, 40-59, 97-105.

13. Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Chennai

14. Sampling

- Neuman Ch 9: Sampling
- Some Basic Ideas of Sampling. November 2000. The University of Reading Statistical Services Centre and Biometrics Advisory and Support Service to DFID. On internet, address:...
- Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. 1984. "Sampling: Bounding the Collection of Data," in *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*, pp. 36-42. Sage.

15. Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Penang

### **Section 3: Organizing a research project from start to finish**

16. Defining and focusing your research questions II; Literature review

- Faculty module

17. Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from China; Research project design

- Faculty module

18. Fieldwork experiences and evaluations from Japan; Do's and Don'ts in proposal writing

- Silverman, Sydel. 1991. Writing grant proposals for anthropological research. *Current Anthropology* 32(4): 485-489. On Wenner-Gren website, address:...
- NIH Proposal Review: Key Words to Watch. *Federal Grants and Contracts Weekly* 12, August 29, 1988, pp. 1, 7-8.

19. Ethics revisited: protection, legality, and sensitive subjects; Human subjects approvals

- Neuman Ch 17: Ethical and Political Issues in Social Research
- University guidelines on Human Subjects approvals (in faculty module)
- American Anthropological Association Statement on Ethics, at: <http://www.aaanet.org/stmnts/ethstmnt.htm>

20. Research management: assistants, budgeting, sequencing activities

- Faculty module

## 21. Managing fieldnotes; Coding; Analysis

- Neuman Ch 12: Analyzing Quantitative Data
- Neuman Ch 16: Analyzing Qualitative Data
- Emerson, R., R. Fretz, and L. Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. (excerpts)
- Silberman, D. 1994. Chapter 1 in *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. 1984. "Analysis During Data Collection," in *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*, pp. 49-78. Sage.

## 22. Writing and publishing; Proposal presentations

- Spradley, James P., and David W. McCurdy. 1972. "Cultural description," in *The cultural experience: Ethnography in complex society*, pp. 79-84. Chicago: Science Research Associates.

### Recommended:

- Becker, Howard. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Spradley, James P. 1979. "Writing an Ethnography," in *The Ethnographic Interview*, pp. 204-217. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

## 23. Proposal presentations

## FIELD COMPONENT

This course has demanding writing requirements throughout the voyage, as students are expected to record field notes while on ship and in port, and to regularly submit them promptly in typewritten form. Journals include on-board and in-port field data, descriptions of research experiences on short assignments, and personal reflections that are an integral part of learning in this course. We will discuss making the most of note-taking and reflective journaling, and students will submit their ongoing journals four times during the journey.

### **All students must complete four field practica in port.**

The first of these must be on a **field trip** led by me to practice field observation, as early as possible in the voyage.

- Cachoeira (Salvador)
- National Botanical Gardens at Kirstenbosch (Capetown)
- Traditional Medicine in India (Chennai)
- Fruit, Vegetable, Herb, and Spice Market Visit (Penang)

The second must be a **service visit** selected from the second list below:

- Salvador: Cultural Mobilization for Children in Danger, Calabar Favela
- Cape Town: Operation Hunger, Amy Biehl Foundation Trust
- Chennai: Missionaries of Charity Orphanage, Dalit Work Project, Disabled Children's Home

The third can be fulfilled by **repeated observation** throughout the voyage.

Pick a scene/type of location that you will attempt to observe for 15-30 minutes in most or all ports we will visit. This could be anything ordinary that you should be able to find in our port stops: the ship's dock, an internet café, street food stalls, a multinational fast food chain, grocery stores or food markets, etc. You will be making and recording very detailed observations in your chosen scene in various locations.

The fourth can be fulfilled by an additional **field trip from the list below or independent practicum** that will help you fulfill the small group project requirement. Students should use the port experiences to practice new skills and to further develop their small group project topics. For example, student projects concerning economies of poverty, cross-cultural gender relations, urban youth culture, or other topics should find ample material in the course of port visits (including reflections assignments for other courses and additional travel) to make substantive reflections and contributions to the course project. This will be reflected both in the journal and in the proposal/project presentation.

- Homestays: strongly recommended
- “Rural village and farm visit” (Chennai)
- “Socio-economic problems in Chennai”
- “Seminar on poverty and gender issues” (Chennai)
- International student exchanges: in Brazil and Japan
- Visits to religious sites

Other independent practica as approved

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION**

Integrating papers on readings	3 (10 points each)	30
Journal and fieldnotes	4 sets (10 points each)	40
Final research proposal or Public oral presentation of research results	15 points	15
Attendance and active class participation	15 points	15

Total=100 points

## **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

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## **RESERVE LIBRARY LIST**

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## **ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS**

### **Section 1: Orientation to fieldwork experience**

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- Marcus, George. 1995. Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24:95-117.
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Recommended additional reference:

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- Sherif, Bahira. 2001. "The Ambiguity of Boundaries in the Fieldwork Experience: Establishing Rapport and Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status." *Qualitative Inquiry* 7(4): 436-447.
- Spradley, James P., and David W. McCurdy. 1972. "The Cultural Experience," in *The cultural experience: Ethnography in complex society*, pp. 1-21. Chicago: Science Research Associates.

3. Observation and participant observation; Taking ethnographic fieldnotes; Gathering and using secondary sources

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10. Surveys and questionnaires

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- Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. 1984. "Sampling: Bounding the Collection of Data," in *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*, pp. 36-42. Sage.

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19. Ethics revisited: protection, legality, and sensitive subjects; Human subjects approvals

- American Anthropological Association Statement on Ethics, at: <http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/ethstmnt.htm>

20. Research management: assistants, budgeting, sequencing activities

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- Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. 1984. "Analysis During Data Collection," in *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*, pp. 49-78. Sage.

22. Writing and publishing; Proposal presentations

- Spradley, James P., and David W. McCurdy. 1972. "Cultural description," in *The cultural experience: Ethnography in complex society*, pp. 79-84. Chicago: Science Research Associates.
- Spradley, James P. 1979. "Writing an Ethnography," in *The Ethnographic Interview*, pp. 204-217. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.