

ANTH 220
Doing Ethnography: Methods, Morals, and the Making of Good Anthropology
(Syllabus is subject to change. Check Moodle for the latest version)

Tues / Thurs 3:10 – 4:30p
OLIN 204

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Hopson 303

Moodle Enrollment Key: dataS17

Course Description: This course is designed to provide an orientation for students in the methods, ethics, and concerns that guide anthropologists when we conduct our research. We do not conceive of methods as simply a means to an end, or the application of established techniques for generating answers to prior problems developed in anthropological theory. Rather, students will be encouraged to think about the types of data that various ethnographic techniques can produce, the epistemological and theoretical assumptions embedded in them, and, most importantly, the ways different strategies for data collection can be combined to form an anthropological research project. To that end, students will develop and execute a short fieldwork-based anthropological research project over the course of the semester. Readings and discussions will guide students through the process of developing research questions, choosing a field site, generating data, and re-presenting that field site in writing. To complement the fieldwork projects, we will also read exemplary – and sometimes controversial - texts of ethnography in practice.

Generous support from the Center for Civic Engagement's Engaged Learning Arts & Sciences Program has allowed us to conduct semester-long ethnographies in our local communities. A list of potential field sites will be made available on Moodle by the end of Week 1. It is your responsibility to contact a field site, make arrangements to actively participate at your field site at least one hour each week, and gather data for your final project. Transportation will be arranged to field sites in Kingston, Rhinebeck, and Hudson. Note: Those of you who sign up to be a Bard Driver will gain an extra 1% on your final grade. Sign up at:
http://blogs.bard.edu/transportation/?page_id=305.

Course Goals:

By the end of the semester, students should feel comfortable designing, producing, and writing about ethnographic data for a senior project or similar research endeavor. This entails learning how to conduct participant observation, interviews, archival research, digital data gathering, and visual media.

However, learning how to do ethnography requires more than just mastering a set of skills for producing data. Every methodological decision you make will affect the kinds of theoretical materials you can mobilize and the kinds of claims you will be able to make. By the end of the semester, students should be able to talk about the relationship between the methods they have used to generate ethnographic data and the analytic claims they make using that data.

As working with human subjects always entails navigated complicated political and ethical terrains, students should also be able to discuss the particular ethical dilemmas posed by their field sites and justify their research practices to other professional ethnographers.

Assignments and Grading:

Class participation (10% of final grade) will include attendance of classes and supplemental lectures, active participation in classroom discussions, and attendance at the instructors' office hours. Attending all classes is mandatory, unless the student makes arrangements with me prior to her absence. Students are expected to read all required readings carefully and to come to class prepared to discuss them. And although there exists a wide range of ways to participate in the course (including in class, office hours, and online), active participation is a requirement for this course, not extra credit.

Ethnography Presentation (10%): At the end of the first unit, we will spend one week looking at several examples of how recent anthropologists have conducted their ethnographies. Students (in groups three to four) will develop short presentations of the methodological choices involved in one recent ethnography of their choosing. A list of recent ethnographies (2005-Present) will be provided on the CHALK website, though students can present a different recent ethnography, with prior permission of the instructor.

Because your classmates will not have read these ethnographies, some summary of the book's main arguments will be needed. However, presentations should concentrate on the methodologies described and implied by the author. Students may wish to address the following questions in their presentation. Some questions you may wish to focus on include: What is/are the object(s) of study of this ethnography? What fieldsites does the ethnographer encounter and how were those sites chosen? What are the main research questions of this project? How does the researched generate data to answer those questions and why were those methods (and not others) chosen? How does the researcher's identity (generational, gendered, racial, class, personality)

affect the type of data produced by the ethnographer? What ethical issues were entailed in this research and how did the researcher navigate those issues?

Field Assignments (40%): In preparation for your final paper, you will conduct a series of field exercises. You must submit your field records and reflections by 10 p.m. the night before class. Come to class prepared to discuss your assignments. Each class, several students will be called upon to discuss their contributions. You may wish to talk about how the particularities of your field site affected the implementation of this methodology, the similarities and differences between your field experience and those discussed in our readings; your strategies, your successes, and especially your struggles. This is your opportunity to gather feedback from your peers on your project. Your grade will be determined by on-time completion of the assignments (15%), the quality of your presentation(s) (15%), and the grade on your two-page progress report (10%). Because it is difficult to conduct ethnography on a set schedule, you will get one free exemption, which you can use to turn in an assignment late or to pass on a cold call to talk about your field assignment.

Final Essay: By the end of the semester, you will produce a 12-15 page essay, based on ethnographic data you have collected over the course of this semester. Your essay should be clearly organized around a set of research questions and a thesis that you articulate in your introduction. However, you should also convey a clear sense of your methods and sources. Your essay will be evaluated both on your description of your research methods and in how well you mobilize ethnographic data to support your thesis.

Policies

Screens Policy: My preference is that no electronic devices be used in class. However, since many of our readings are articles and book chapters and, recognizing the high costs of printing, I will permit you to have laptops or tablets with the readings pulled up on two conditions. First, you must take notes on the reading, using a program like Skim or in a separate Word document. Second, that you continue to take classroom notes on a paper notebook. Phones are not permitted under any circumstances. If you need an exemption to this policy, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Policy: This class has a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism. As per Bard College's Academic Regulations (<http://www.bard.edu/undergraduate/requirements/>): "The Bard faculty regards acts of plagiarism very seriously...Students who are found to have plagiarized or engaged in academic dishonesty will be placed on academic probation." Plagiarism will also result in an automatic failure in the course.

Disability Policy: If you require any accommodation for this course, please present the instructor with a copy of your Accommodation Verification Letter as soon as possible. Bard College's Disability Support Coordinator can be contacted at: disabilityservices@bard.edu or 845.758.7532.

Absence Policy: You are expected to attend all classes, arriving on time and remaining for the duration of the class. After more than two unexcused absences, I reserve the right to lower your final grade. After more than six unexcused absences, I reserve the right to withhold a passing grade. I will count two late-arrivals as equivalent to one absence.

Required Texts: Most readings will be available electronically through Moodle. The only exceptions are the ethnographies you will read for the mid-course presentations. Those, you will have to order for yourself, take out from the library, or request through ConnectNY. You may also wish to consider buying a copy of Booth et al's *The Craft of Research*, which is an excellent resource to have as you embark on your senior projects and beyond.

Course Schedule:

Session 1.1 (31 Jan): Introduction

- What makes for a good ethnography?
- How to pick a field site for the class project

Session 1.2 (2 Feb): What Is Ethnography, anyway?

- Boellestroff, Tom et al. 2012. "Ten Myths About Ethnography." In *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook on Methods*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 29-51.
- Gottlieb, Alma 2006. Ethnography: Theory and Methods. In, *A Handbook for Social Science Field Research*. London: SAGE, pp. 47-66.

PART I: ANTHROPOLOGICAL METHODS, PAST AND PRESENT

Session 2.1 (7 Feb): Foundations of Ethnography

- Malinowski, Bronislaw 1984 [1922]. Introduction: The Subject, Method and Scope of this Inquiry" In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, pp. 1-25.
- Mead, Margaret 2009 [1928]. Introduction & A Day in Samoa. In *Coming of Age in Samoa*. New York: William Morrow and Co, pp. 1-19.

<p>☞ REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT: Form a group and sign up via email to present one ethnography on Week 5. Don't forget to order a copy of your ethnography or request one from the library now, so that it will arrive on time. Email the instructor no later than 8 Feb with your selection</p>
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Session 2.2 (9 Feb): Emic and Etic Perspectives

- Pelto, Pertti J. and Gretel H. Pelto. 1978. "Units of observation: emic and etic approaches" In, *Anthropological Research: The Structure of Inquiry*. Second Edition. New York: Cambridge University Press, 54-66.

- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1976. “Appendix IV: Some Reminiscences and Reflections on Fieldwork”. In *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 240-254

Session 3.2 (16 Feb): The Phenomenological Approach

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight.” In, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books: 412-453.

Session 4.1 (21 Feb): The Writing Culture Critique

- Clifford, James 1986. “Introduction: Partial Truths.” In, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Culture*, edited by James Clifford and George E. Marcus. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 1-26.
- Pool, Robert. 1991. “‘Oh, Research, Very Good’: On Fieldwork and Representation.” In *Constructing Knowledge: Authority and Critique in Social Science*, edited by Lorraine Nencel and Peter Pels. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 59-77.

Session 4.2 (23 Feb): Studying Up and Out

- Nader, Laura 2002 [1969]. Up the Anthropologist: Perspectives Gained from Studying. In *Reinventing Anthropology*, edited by Dell Hymes. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 284-311.
- Hannerz, Ulf. (2003) “Being there... and there... and there! Reflections on multi-Site ethnography.” *Ethnography* 4(2): 201-216

- **👉 REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT: Submit via Moodle your initial proposal for your research project. Include your main research questions, field sites, and research populations.**

PART II: THE ANTHROPOLOGIST’S TOOLBOX.

Session 5.1 (28 Feb): Defining the Field

- Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. 1997. “Discipline and Practice: ‘The Field’ as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology.” In, *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 1-40.

- **👉 REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT: Submit one paragraph on Moodle describing your fieldsite(s). You should include any methodological or ethical issues you expect to encounter as part of your post.**

Session 5.2 (2 Mar): Ethnography Presentations Part I

- Presentations from Groups 1-3.

Session 6.1 (7 Mar): Ethnography Presentation Part II + Discussion your Field Notes

- Presentation from Group 4
- Passaro, Joanne. 1997. "‘You can’t take the Subway to the Field!’: ‘Village’ Epistemologies in the Global Village." In *Anthropological Locations. Boundaries and Grounds for a Field Science*. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson. Eds. Berkeley, London, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 147-162

Session 6.2 (9 Mar): Taking Field notes

- Sanjek, Roger, 1990. "A Vocabulary for Fieldnotes". In *Fieldnotes the Makings of Anthropology*. Cornell University Press, pp. 92-138.
- In preparation for class, please consult selections from the instructor’s fieldnotes posted on Moodle.

☞ REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT: Submit one paragraph on Moodle about your experiences conducting participant observation and taking fieldnotes. Please include at least one page of typed field notes as an attachment and the corresponding scratch notes. Please review your submissions in preparation for our discussion on Monday of next week.

Session 7.1 (14 Mar): Discussing Your Field Notes

- Taussig, Michael. 2011. "Chapter 1," "Chapter 3," and "Afterthoughts," In, *I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely my Own*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1-9, 21-31, 141-152.

Session 7.2 (16 Mar) Conducting Interviews

- Briggs, Charles 1986. "Introduction" (Selections) and "Interview Techniques vis-à-vis native metacommunicative repertoires; or, on the analysis of communicative blunders". In, *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-6, 21-28, 39-60.

March 17-25th: Spring Recess. No Class

☞ REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT: Submit typed transcript of interview or focus group excerpt (at least two pages), along with one paragraph describing your expectations, question-design, interview strategies, and any issues you encountered while conducting the interview.

Session 8.1 (28 Mar) Discussing Your Interviews

- Sangster, Joan. 1994. "Telling Out Stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history." *Women’s History Review* 3(1): 5-28. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09612029400200046>

Session 8.2 (30 Mar) Conducting Archival Research

- Dirks, Nicholas B. 2002. Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History. In *From the margins: historical anthropology and its futures*. Brian Keith Axel, ed. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 47-65.

☞ **REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT:** Submit an archival record from your fieldsite (minimum 2 documents) and a one paragraph reflection on the exercise of creating that record.

Session 9.1 (4 Apr) Discussing Your Archival Research

- Stoler, Ann Laura. 2002. "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance." *Archival Science* 2: 87-109.

Session 9.2 (6 Apr) Making Ethnographic Film and Image

Class will choose one of the following readings:

- Pink, Sarah. 2007. "Planning and Practicing 'Visual Methods': Appropriate Uses and Ethical Issues." In *Doing Visual Ethnography*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, pp. 40-62.
- Hoffman, Daniel. 2014. "Corpus: Mining the Border." *Cultural Anthropology*. Available at: https://culanth.org/photo_essays/1-corpus-mining-the-border
 - **Note: Please read the photo essay, Reviewer Comments, Not Just Bodies, and the Comments Section.**

☞ **REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT:** Submit a visual or record from your fieldsite (minimum: 5 photos, or 5 min of video) and a one paragraph reflection on the exercise of creating that record.

Session 10.1 (11 Apr) Discussing your Visual Ethnographies & Researching Online Worlds

- Selections from Boellestroff, Tom et al. 2012. *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook on Methods*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 69-82, 94-104, 118-120, 131-135

➤ ☞ **REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT:** Submit a record of your online research (minimum: 2 screenshots) and a one paragraph reflection on the exercise of creating that record.

Session 10.2 (13 Apr) Discussing Your Online Ethnographies & The Ethics of Ethnography

- Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association. Available at: <http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>
- Chs. 3 and 4 ("Case Studies") from *The American Anthropological Association Handbook on Ethical Issues in Anthropology*. Special Publication #23. Available at: <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/toc.htm>

PART III: NOW WHAT? SPECIAL ISSUES IN CONDUCTING ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH.

Session 11.1 (18 Apr) Class Canceled

Session 11.2 (20 Apr) Guest Lectureship. Jordan Kraemer on Researching Online Worlds

- Kraemer, Jordan. 2016. "Doing Fieldwork, BRB: Locating the Field on and with Emerging Media." In *eFieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology in the Digital World*. Edited by Roger Sanjek and Susan W. Tratner. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kraemer, Jordan. 2016. "Ethical Entanglements." Facebook as research field and research platform. 57th E-Seminar of the EASA Media Anthropology Network in collaboration with AAA's Digital Anthropology Group (DANG) and the Committee for the Anthropology of Science, Technology & Computing (CASTAC). 22 June – 6 July.

Special Session 20 Apr @ 6PM: REQUIRED LECTURE from Jordan Kraemer

Special Session. 24 Apr @ 6 PM: REQUIRED FILM SCREENING: Katie Detwiler and Anna Niedermeyer

Session 12.1 (25 Apr)

Guest Lectureship: Film and Collaborative Ethnography. Katie Detwiler and Anna Niedermeyer

- Watch: [Atiku Napeu](#) (48 minutes)
- Read: "Film and Cosmopolitics" Interview with Mario Blaser (2 pp. same link)
- Watch: The [Trailer](#) for *Leviathan*, Directed by Lucien Taylor and Verena Paravel
- Read: "Leviathan: An Ethnographic Dream" (4 pp. Attached)
- **Recommended supplemental reading:** "Iconophobia" by Lucien Taylor (26 pp. Attached)

☞ **REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT:** Submit a two-page progress report describing the development of your project in relation to your research questions, how (if at all) those research questions have changed, and your plans for completing your research over the next three weeks.

Session 12.2 (27 Apr) Discussing Ethical and Political Challenges From Your Fieldsites

- Re-Read: Chs. 3 and 4 ("Case Studies") from *The American Anthropological Association Handbook on Ethical Issues in Anthropology*. Special Publication #23. Available at: <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/toc.htm>
- Read your classmates experiences from the field and think about how you would handle these situations.

2 May: No Class. Advising Day

- ☞ **REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT:** Submit an ethical or political dilemma you faced in the field. Discuss how you handled the challenge. Then, evaluate your response. To what

extent are you satisfied that you handled this problem properly? Would you have acted the same again? What did you learn from navigating this challenge?

Session 13.1 (4 May) The Politics of Ethnography: The BDS Debate. In this class, we will examine the recent controversy over whether the American Anthropological Association should endorse the Palestinian-led call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions. Our goal is not to discuss the broader Palestine-Israel conflict, so much as to evaluate, debate, and consider its implications for professional anthropological research and the professional association.

- “Executive Summary.” AAA Task Force Report on Israel-Palestine. pp. vii-ix. <http://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-aaa/files/production/public/FileDownloads/151001-AAA-Task-Force-Israel-Palestine.pdf>
- Rofel, Lisa and Ilana Feldman. 2014. “Why Anthropologists Should Boycott Israeli Academic Institutions” *Anthropology News*. <https://anthroboycott.wordpress.com/2014/11/04/why-anthropologists-should-boycott-israeli-academic-institutions/>
- Omar, Dina. 2015. “We Are All Uncomfortable: On Academic Boycott & What Is Productive.” May 20th. <https://anthroboycott.wordpress.com/2015/05/20/palestinian-anthropologists-speak-5-dina-omar/>
- Rosen, David M. “The BDS Attack on Israeli Anthropology” <https://polarjournal.org/the-bds-attack-on-israeli-anthropology/>
- Rabinowitz, Dan. “A Progressive Response to BDS” <https://www.anthrodialogue.org/single-post/2015/12/16/A-Progressive-Response-to-BDS>
- Anthropologists for Dialogue on Israel / Palestine. “FAQs” <https://www.anthrodialogue.org/faq>
- Anthropologists for the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions. “Yes, but...” <https://anthroboycott.wordpress.com/yes-but/>

Session 14.1 (9 May) Writing Good Ethnography

- Sanjek, Roger. 1990. “On Ethnographic Validity.” In, *Fieldnotes: The Making of Good Ethnography*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. 385-413
- Duneier, Mitchell. 2011. “How Not to Lie with Ethnography.” *Sociological Methodology* 41(1): 1-11.

Session 14.2 (11 May) Writing Ethnography Well

- Booth Wayne C., Gregogry G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, 2008. Selections from *The Craft of Research*. Third Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 9-14, 35-67, 108-118
 - **Note: If you are using a different edition of *Craft of Research*, your pagination may differ. Consult Moodle for the relevant chapters.**

Session 15.1 (16 May) Students Choice: Wrap up an Reflect and/or Looking forward to the IRB

➤ **FINAL PAPER due 22 May via email**