

## **ANT 660 - Ethnographic Research Methods**

Spring 2011 Tuesday 10-12:30, Lafferty 104

Professor Lisa Cliggett

Office: Lafferty 216, phone: 257-2796 Email: [lisa.cliggett@uky.edu](mailto:lisa.cliggett@uky.edu)

Office Hours: Thurs 1:30-3pm, Friday afternoons by appointment  
and by appointment other days

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed to provide a survey of a broad range of data collection techniques for contemporary ethnographic research. Course instruction focuses on data collection techniques with a goal of exposure to a range of relevant methodologies, including strategies for qualitative data analysis. In order to carryout methodologically sound social science research, investigators must also have a clear research design centered on clear research questions and/or hypotheses. We will briefly consider research design at the outset of this course, but primary focus will be given to data collection strategies. This course is appropriate for students planning professional careers in social science – whether within academia, applied or policy relevant contexts.

The course instruction will consist of three elements: 1) weekly commentary by the professor and class discussion of readings led by 2 (approximately) students, intended to stimulate general participation by everyone; 2) exercises / experiments with and demonstrations of particular techniques; 3) a close reading of an exemplary ethnography; 4) development of a research proposal OR a term paper based on a field research project.

### **Course Readings**

#### **Texts:**

- Jennifer S. Hirsch; Holly Wardlow; Daniel Jordan Smith; Harriet M. Phinney; Shanti Parikh and Constance A. Nathanson. 2010. *The Secret: Love, Marriage, and HIV*. Nashville: Vanderbilt U. Press.
- Russell Bernard. *Research Methods in Anthropology*. FOURTH Edition. 2006. We will read most of this book, so you want a personal copy.
- Margaret LeCompte and Jean Schensul 1999 *designing and conducting ethnographic research*. Alta Mira Press. (vol 1)  
AND
- Stephen Schensul; Jean Schensul and Margaret LeCompte 1999 *Essential Ethnographic Methods* (vol 2) We will read parts of both of these books; it would be best to have your own copies of these, especially because they are excellent resources. Additionally, there are a total of 7 books in this series, and at least 3 others (volumes 3 -5) would be extremely helpful. I recommend that all of you get the whole series. However, as a class we will be reading primarily from vol 1 & 2.

**And various journal articles or chapters. I have, or am in the process of getting, pdf for most of them.** (you will see the articles/chapters listed in the schedule under the week in which you will read them)

- Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. (I have a pdf that I hope I can

email out. But this is a classic book if you want to have all “the right books” in your personal library.)

- Salganik, Matthew J. ; Douglas D. Heckathorn 2004 **Sampling and Estimation in Hidden Populations Using Respondent-Driven Sampling** *Sociological Methodology* Vol. 34: 193-239.
- Warwick and Lininger, chp 4 in: [The sample survey: Theory and Practice](#).
- Axinn and Pearce chp 1 in [Mixed Methods Data Collection Strategies](#).
- Johnson, J. C. 1990. Selecting ethnographic informants. *Qualitative research methods*, v. 22. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Gatewood, J. B. 1984. Familiarity, vocabulary size, and recognition ability in four semantic domains. *American Ethnologist* 11:507–27.
- Weller, S. (2007). Cultural consensus theory: Applications and frequently asked questions. *Field Methods*, 19(3), 339-368.
- Garro, Linda C. 1986. Intracultural variation in folk medical knowledge: A comparison between curers and noncurers. *American Anthropologist* 88(2):351-370.
- Hruschka, D. J., Schwartz, D., Cobbs, D., Picone -Decaro, E., Jenkins, R., & Carey, J. (2004). Reliability in coding open-ended data: Lessons learned from HIV behavioral research. *Field Methods*, 16, 307.
- Habicht, J.P., C.G. Victora and J.P. Vaughan. 1999. “Evaluation Designs for Adequacy, Plausibility and Probability of Public Health Programme Performance and Impact.” *International Journal of Epidemiology* 28:10-18.
- Valadez, J. and M. Bamberger. *Monitoring and Evaluating Social Programs in Developing Countries: a handbook for policymakers, managers, and researchers*. EDI Development Studies. The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1994.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Food and Nutrition Division. Targeting for nutrition improvement. Resources for Advancing nutritional well-being. FAO, Rome, 2001. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/y1329e/y1329e00.htm>

Other books that are great resources, but which we won’t read:

R. Emerson, R. Fretz, and L. Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press. 1995.

R. Sanjek. *Fieldnotes: The makings of Anthropology*. Cornell University Press. 1990.

### Assignments / Grading

Assignment 1 (week 3) – research plan statement	5 points
Assignment 2 (week 5) – description of field site	5 points
Assignment 3 (week 7) – critical book review	10 points
Assignment 4 (week 12) – code books and statement	15 points
Designated driving 2-3 times	10 points
Term Project	
Written paper	40 points
Oral presentation (weeks 14-15)	5 points
Class participation	10 points

### **The Term Project:**

There are two options – 1) development of an NSF style dissertation research proposal OR 2) a written “report” / paper on a coherent research project carried out during the semester.

No matter which term project you choose, during the semester there will be a number of small assignments in which you will carry out / experiment with various data collection techniques. If you choose the field research as your term project, it would make sense for those assignments to be part of your research.

### *The NSF proposal:*

Go to the following web site for style and examples:

<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/bcs/anthro/suppdiss.jsp>

Another site for proposal writing from SSRC:

[http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/art\\_of\\_writing\\_proposals.page](http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/art_of_writing_proposals.page)

And one other useful site, from an anthropologist at U. Florida Gainesville who is a big proponent of rigorous methods in anthropology. This link takes you to a page of successful NSF proposals. Other areas of Lance Gravlee’s web site have lots of useful information, browse as you like.

<http://gravlee.org/ang5091/proposals.htm>

Most important in this class project is to clearly outline the link between research questions, hypotheses, data needed, and methods that will be used to get that data, that through specific analyses will feed back to valid information to test hypotheses and answer questions. Each student will present their proposal (or paper) orally at the end of the semester (approximately 15 minutes).

A coherent research design (1) links your stated hypotheses to (2) your numerous research questions, (3) identifies the different variables and data you wish to collect and (4) your choice of methods to collect the data.

*Tips from an esteemed colleague on how to approach a dissertation research proposal (NSF style):* Remember the goal of a dissertation research proposal is to design a coherent research proposal that is convincing and can be completed in 12 months; and convinces the reader that you are well prepared to carry on the project. It is NOT to show the reader that you know all of the relevant literature (that is assumed if you have been in graduate school), all of the latest methods, and data analysis techniques.

A technique for developing a sound research proposal: To outline a specific research design for your project, do the following. On a sheet of paper make 5 columns. In one column (1) list out your hypotheses; (2) in the next column disaggregate your research questions and clump them according to how they relate to a specific research hypothesis (do not assume the reader will be able to look at the questions and be able to link them to one or more of the 4 stated research hypotheses—you need to do this); (3) in a third

column list the types of data for each of the 4 hypotheses that you need to collect to test the hypothesis; (4) in the fourth column list the methods that will be used to collect the specific data that you will need to test your hypothesis; and (5) a final column that lays out the data analysis techniques you will use vis-a-vis each stated hypothesis. If the data and the methods that you state in your proposal are peripheral to testing your hypotheses, then get rid of them. It is much better to list fewer data to be collected and fewer methods to be used and explain why they are so important to your project and to testing your hypotheses (i.e., provide some depth!!), than to provide a laundry list of data/variables and methods with little detailed explanation of how they will help you to test your hypotheses. In the same manner if the literature and theories that you review cannot be shown to be directly relevant to testing your hypotheses, then I would delete parts of it. The lit/theory review has to tie very closely to how they inform your stated hypotheses. In the proposal you might want to use a table to show how the specific data you collect and methods you use will directly allow you to answer your research questions and test your hypotheses. Relate each method/data type to a specific hypothesis of your project. A table that clearly lays out the logic of your research design may help and could be inserted in the proposal. It is one thing to come up with a good question (s) and set of plausible and important hypotheses to test; it is a totally different matter to come up with a coherent research design that convinces the reader that you will succeed in collecting the necessary data and employ the right methods and data analysis technique to test your hypotheses. Note: saying that you will collect quantitative and qualitative data is not helpful— most “empirically based” anthropologists say that these days! You must specify why an individual hypothesis requires a certain kind of data (qual/interview data, survey/quant. data, etc.) to be tested. Perhaps your hypotheses require both kinds of data to be tested or only one type—you must make the case!

### Field Research Project:

The field research project will involve making observations, conducting interviews, and other relevant data collection, and gathering secondary data on a specific problem you design. The project should involve a number of different data collection techniques, but all of the projects will require observation and various kinds of interviewing.

If you like, you can work in pairs. In that case, project grades will be assigned to both people based on a single final written report.

The final written report will be evaluated according to the quality of the underlying data, the clarity and precision of the analysis and presentation, and its value both as a study and as a practical exercise from which valuable lessons were learned. Each person or team will make an oral report on the project of roughly 15 minutes at the end of the semester.

**IMPORTANT** regarding the field research project. The **IRB** rules on class based projects: if the data generated from a class project **WILL NOT BE** made public, used for any publications, or be used for future research purposes (ie: NOT feed into your masters or dissertation research projects) you do not need IRB approval. **IF**, however, you plan to use data you collect this semester as part of your future academic work (for Masters or

PhD work, or hope to write a public report from it) you MUST get IRB approval. If you think you might use this data down the road, you MUST get IRB APPROVAL. We will discuss many of these issues in class, but in order to get IRB approval, in addition to what you do on your own, you must work closely with your advisor to go through the process. I know many advisors who actually attend the review with their advisees. Please start talking to your advisors NOW about the IRB process.

In addition to the individual projects that each of you might have in mind, other possible projects the class assignment could be:

- *Piloting Theses / Dissertations*: Students in planning phases of theses or dissertation projects may want to create a field project that allows practice and experiment with possible research techniques. The focus here would be exploring possible field techniques. But if you want to actually DO preliminary research for your thesis / dissertation, you will need IRB clearance.
- *Needs Assessments and Evaluations*. There are many opportunities to do this with local organizations like community centers, churches and government programs, which usually find the final project valuable to them (you would need IRB approval). If you chose this option, I suggest working with a group / org you already know – the logistics of starting from scratch in the time frame of a semester is perhaps more than can be accomplished meaningfully.
- *Studies of Local Ethnicity or “Culture.”* One could describe and study the interaction of one of the ethnic or “cultural groups” of Lexington, perhaps doing the oral history of a group. (this could include the subculture of “the UK bicycling community,” “skateboarders,” “volunteers,” “environmental activists” etc, as well as genuine “ethnic groups.”) (Might need IRB, depending on the population).
- *Assessment of Past Development Projects*. Such projects are rarely studied retrospectively after completion. It would be interesting to look at the planning of a particular project against how it actually turned out, and try to explain the difference. (less likely to need IRB, UNLESS you provide a report evaluation that goes beyond me).
- *Transnational Migrant Studies*. Many migrants from other countries have elderly parents and other kin whom they have left behind in the home country and to whom they send remittances and gifts or otherwise provide care. One could study a local ethnic community from that perspective. (Might need IRB approval).
- There are other possibilities: a family history, a study of a cohort of grad students, grad student culture... we can talk about other feasible projects in class.

### **TENTATIVE SEMESTER SCHEDULE (very subject to changes and adjustments):**

**Week 0 – Tuesday Jan 11** – no class – classes start Wed Jan 12

**Week 1 - Tuesday Jan 18. Research Design and Ethics**

**DO ASAP:** Do training for Human Subjects approval here: <http://www.citiprogram.org/> You must **take and pass** the on-line training for work with human subjects at the site listed above.

- a. Sources of information on Ethics and Human Subjects – review these, explore the web sites: American Anthropological Association Ethics: <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethics.htm>
- b. Get information about UK’s Human Subjects clearance, and mandatory education on Human Subjects at these sites: <http://www.research.uky.edu/ori/>  
[http://www.research.uky.edu/ori/human/Human\\_Research\\_Mandatory\\_Education.htm](http://www.research.uky.edu/ori/human/Human_Research_Mandatory_Education.htm)

**Task assignment:** Explore some Qualitative Data Analysis programs.

Later in the semester you will be conducting textual data analysis. Getting familiar with this software can help with that later process.

- MAXQDA software (becoming one of the most popular qualitative data analysis packages):
  - <http://www.maxqda.com/>
  - <http://www.maxqda.com/downloads/demo>
  - <http://edtech2.boisestate.edu/qda/MAXqda.htm>
- NVIVO software (also a leading package)
  - [http://www.qsrinternational.com/#tab\\_you](http://www.qsrinternational.com/#tab_you)
  - [http://www.qsrinternational.com/products\\_nvivo.aspx](http://www.qsrinternational.com/products_nvivo.aspx)
- A free basic program is “Weft-qda” (an inexpensive way to explore)
  - <http://www.pressure.to/qda/>

**Reading Assignment (to be completed by next class meeting):** Bernard, skim chapters 1-2 (pp 1-69). AND L&S vol 1, chaps 1-2 (p. 1-40).

*Important questions / themes to consider / discuss:*

- What is knowledge in Social Science? (“how” do we know?) What role do paradigms play?
- Are qualitative and quantitative methods genuinely different? How yes? How no? Why do people get so bothered by distinguishing?
- Why do ethics matter?
- What are variables? Why do they matter?
- Ye ol’ issue of validity, reliability and yadda yadda... but it’s important!
- What does everyone mean by “research design?”

No designated drivers for the above material, but everyone should come to class (next week) with comments and reflections from the readings to generate some class discussion. We will spend approximately half an hour discussing these issues, then move on to the other readings for next week.

## **Week 2 – January 25 Design / Ethics Continued**

**Guest Speaker** (for about 30 min): Prof. Sarah Lyon on IRB

### **Reading Assignment**

- Bernard Chap 5 & 6
- L&S vol 1 Chap 3-5 (p. 41-126) AND chap 9 (ethical treatment) (p. 183-204).
- The Secret: Acknowledgements & Introduction and Chap 1.

Designated Drivers: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Week 3 –Feb 1 Sampling Strategies**

### **Assignment 1**

- 1) **Submit a term project statement (Assignment 1).** Either a research proposal for a field project OR a statement about the NSF proposal you will write (1 single spaced page, @ 500 words). (5 points)
  - a) For the field project proposal. What focus? On what population? Discuss core concepts, basic research questions, the population you will interview and do participant observation with, ideas for data collection methods, etc. This can be changed and developed until Feb 13. The purpose is to get you focused on a project quickly, if that is your preference for the term project.
  - b) For the NSF proposal. What are the core concepts, general research questions, what bodies of literature will inform the framework, what population? Consider attempting some solid research questions and perhaps taking them to hypotheses.

**Task Assignment:** begin visiting your research site, or decide on a place in which to practice “participant observation” and other kinds of observations. Begin writing field notes from observations. Think about issues of entry into the field. We will discuss these ideas in class.

### **Reading Assignment:**

- Bernard Chap 7
- S;S&L vol 2 Chaps 10-11 AND
- Salganik, Matthew J. ; Douglas D. Heckathorn 2004 Sampling and Estimation in Hidden Populations Using Respondent-Driven Sampling *Sociological Methodology* Vol. 34: 193-239.

Possible Additions:

- Warwick and Lininger, chp 4 in: The sample survey: Theory and Practice.
- Axinn and Pearce chp 1 in Mixed Methods Data Collection Strategies.
- Johnson, J. C. 1990. Selecting ethnographic informants. *Qualitative research methods*, v. 22. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Designated Drivers: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Week 4 – Feb 8 “Paying Attention” – ie: Participant Observation**

### **Reading Assignment:**

- Bernard Chap 13 &14
- SSL vol 2 chap 4-5,
- The Secret: Appendix I&III (starts pg 221),
- Geertz “Thick Description”

Designated Drivers: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions to think about:

- What is ethnography? What does Geertz mean by interpretation? What is thick description? What other kinds of analysis and social science study are there? How can we combine qualitative / quantitative data and research?

- How do we manage the fact that we can't watch everything? How do we make "paying attention" structured? In what ways is observation rigorous, in what ways not?

**Week 5 – Feb 15 Asking for Info I.**

**Assignment 2** Continue with field observations. Write an evocative description of your field site (250 words) to **read** in class in this meeting – and turn in to me (5 points). I strongly encourage you to have started reading your ethnography by now, so that you have at least one example in mind of what an ethnographic field description reads like.

**Reading Assignment:** Interviewing I: Unstructured, Semi-Structured,

- Bernard Chap 9 (pp. 210-299)
- SSL vol 2 chap 6-7 (p. 121-164),
- The Secret: Appendix II (starts pg 228).
- Gatewood, J. B. 1984. Familiarity, vocabulary size, and recognition ability in four semantic domains. *American Ethnologist* 11:507–27.

Designated Drivers: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 6 – Feb 22 Data Analysis I**

**Task Assignment:** Continue observation and field note writing. Begin identifying a few people you might want to interview. During class we'll talk about ideas for who to interview.

**Task Assignment:** Begin reading through **field notes** for coding purposes. Get ready to use "weft-qda" or other qualitative data analysis software Begin creating a code book of codes / themes from analyzing FIELDNOTES (not interviews). Be prepared to talk about the codes, and the process of coding your work IN CLASS next week.

**Reading Assignment: Data Analysis**

- Bernard Chapter 16 (pp 451-463)
- LS vol 1 chap 6&7 (p. 127-160),
- Hruschka, D. J., Schwartz, D., Cobbs, D., Picone -Decaro, E., Jenkins, R., & Carey, J. (2004). Reliability in coding open-ended data: Lessons learned from HIV behavioral research. *Field Methods*, 16, 307.

Designated Drivers: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 7 – March 1 – Ethnographic break.**

**Assignment 3:** Each student will have read one ethnography from a list I provide. Students will write a 2 page critical book review, with specific attention to the methodology, and the process of: data collection, analysis and transformation into the ethnographic story.

**Task Assignment:** Conduct at least 2 extensive interviews (approximately 30 minutes, recorded. ALSO take written notes during interview.)



**Task Assignment:** FINISH coding the majority of your fieldnotes. (SEPARATELY from interviews – it is usually NOT the same coding process (or even codes!).

### **Week 8 – March 8 Data Analysis II**

**Task Assignment:** Conduct at least 1 more extensive semi-structured interview. Transcribe all interviews over spring break (if you haven't already) and begin coding them over spring break, at the latest (I suggest getting it all done over spring break!).

#### **Reading Assignment:**

- Bernard Chapter 17-18 (pp. 463-522).
- The Secret: Conclusion (pg. 197-220).

Designated Drivers: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Week 9– March 14-18**

NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK – finish all transcriptions and all coding!

### **Week 10 – March 22 Asking for Info II**

**Task Assignment:** Have your semi-structured interviews completed, transcribed and close to finished with coding (if not completed !). These should be **coded separately from your field notes**.

#### **Reading Assignment:** Interviewing II: Ethnographic surveys and questionnaires:

- Bernard Chap 10 (pp. 251-298)
- SSL vol 2 chap 8 (p. 165-201).

Designated Drivers: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Week 11 – March 29**

*No class* meeting ***BUT you must email to me*** (ANT660 in subject line) by THURSDAY March 31 at 6pm your *assignment 4* – email **ONLY** the code books (of codes and themes) and the 500 word statement. **DO NOT** email me all of your fieldnotes, interviews, etc.

**Assignment 4** Turn in your code books of codes / themes from analyzing **INTEVIEWS** and **FIELDNOTES** (code books graded on 5 point scale) . Write a 500 word statement about how the codes / themes from your field notes and interviews either match, compliment or completely diverge from each other. Think about what coding these different kinds of texts means. We will talk about this in class on week 12. (statement graded on 10 point scale)

**Week 12 – April 5 – Some specific techniques:**

**Reading Assignment**

- Weller, S. (2007). Cultural consensus theory: Applications and frequently asked questions. *Field Methods*, 19(3), 339-368.
- Garro, Linda C. 1986. Intracultural variation in folk medical knowledge: A comparison between curers and noncurers. *American Anthropologist* 88(2):351-370.
- (possibly a few others)

Designated Drivers: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 13 – April 12 - Instruments and evaluations**

**Reading Assignment**

- Habicht, J.P., C.G. Victora and J.P. Vaughan. 1999. “Evaluation Designs for Adequacy, Plausibility and Probability of Public Health Programme Performance and Impact.” *International Journal of Epidemiology* 28:10-18.
- Valadez, J. and M. Bamberger. *Monitoring and Evaluating Social Programs in Developing Countries: a handbook for policymakers, managers, and researchers*. EDI Development Studies. The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1994.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Food and Nutrition Division. *Targeting for nutrition improvement. Resources for Advancing nutritional well-being*. FAO, Rome, 2001. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/y1329e/y1329e00.htm>

Designated Drivers: \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 14 – April 19**

Final Paper is due on Tuesday April 19 IN CLASS (hard copy in class, also electronic copy via Bb or email – still working on that).

Student presentations

**Week 15 – April 26**

Student presentations

**Week 16 – May 2-6 FINALS WEEK**

FINALS WEEK – no class, no tasks, no readings UNLESS we miss a class or get behind....

Hopefully that won't happen.