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# *Anthropological Field Methods*

## *ANTH 4011.003*

*WH 310.Tu/Th 9:30-10:50am*

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### Instructor

Professor Melissa Nelson  
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### Office Hours

Tu/Th: 12:00-2:00pm

### Office

Department of Anthropology  
Chilton Hall, Rm. 330E

Anthropologists “think” and “see” the world very differently than the average person. Perhaps it is both our pride and our curse that we are so “awake” to culture. When one begins to see things through the eyes of an anthropologist it’s as if a switch gets turned on...and stays stuck there. It’s when culture goes beyond our National Geographic imaginations and ventures into the minutiae of people’s everyday routines. This class is a workshop...this syllabus, a living document...where we will walk the footsteps of the anthropologist’s mind and train not only to see but to wrestle with culture. We begin with the most difficult culture to face, our own...

### Grade Breakdown

Attendance 5%  
Concept Papers 15%  
Fieldnote Reflections 15%  
Midterm 25%  
Final 40%

### FORMATTING GUIDELINES

1 Inch Margins  
Times New Roman Font  
12 pt. font  
1.5 line spacing

### Attendance

Everyone starts out with 100 points. 5 point deduction for unexcused absences. Excused absences are accompanied by a doctor’s note or at the instructor’s discretion if notified prior to the missed lecture. Two consecutive tardies= 1 absence.

### Concept Papers (5 papers)

Take home essay questions designed to help you think through some of the themes of fieldwork and ethnography. 200-300 words.

### Fieldnote Reflections (4 reflections)

Take home essay questions following each fieldwork exercise (4x). These assignments are practice in analyzing your experiential work in terms of the concepts we are discussing in class. 300-500 words.

### Midterm Exam

A take home essay targeting a concept based question.  
500-700 words.

### Final Exam

A take home essay that develops an original research question based on preliminary research encounters.  
1000-1500 words.

*"THOSE WHO ARE ABLE TO SEE BEYOND THE SHADOWS AND LIES OF THEIR CULTURE WILL NEVER BE UNDERSTOOD, LET ALONE BELIEVED, BY THE MASSES."*

-Plato

## *Introduction*

1/17-1/19

"The Ethnographer" in Collected Fictions  
Borges, J.L., 1998. Trans. By Andrew Hurley. Penguin Books: pp. 334-335.

"Fieldwork as Art?" in The Art of Fieldwork.  
Wolcott, Harry. 2005. Altamira Press: Walnut Creek... pp.15-24.

"Preface: For the Student" in Starting Fieldwork: Methods and Experiences.  
Marti, J.E. 2017. Waveland Press, Inc. pp. xi-xii

## *Unit 1: Methodology*

1/24-1/26

"Methods: What are methods?" in Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography.  
Madden, R. Sage Publications. pp. 24-34.

"Ethnography and Participant Observation." in Handbook of Qualitative Research.  
Atkinson and Hammersley. 1994. Denzin and Lincoln, eds. Pp. 248-260.

"A Dispute in Donggo: Fieldwork and Ethnography." in Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction.  
Monaghan & Just. Oxford University Press. 2000. pp. 13-33.

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### *Concept Paper #1: Methodology*

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## *Unit 2: Ethnography*

1/31-2/16

### **TRAINING EXERCISE # 1: KULTURE CLUB INFILTRATION**

"Characterising Ethnography?" in Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography.  
Madden, R. Sage Publications. pp. 15-24.

#### **Finding culture in the field**

"In Pursuit of Culture" in Tales of the Field.  
Van Maanan, J. 1988. The University of Chicago Press: pp.13-44.

"Bee Larvae and Onion Soup: Culture." in Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction.  
Monaghan & Just. Oxford University Press. 2000. pp. 34-52.

"Discipline and Practice: The 'Field' as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology" in Anthropological Locations.  
Gupta and Ferguson. 1997. University of California Press: pp. 1-46.

#### **Participant-Observation**

"Participant-Observation" in Starting Fieldwork: Methods and Experiences.  
Marti, J.E. 2017. Waveland Press, Inc. pp. 45-56.

"Being With People: Participation" in Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography.  
Madden, R. Sage Publications. pp. 77-94.



***Unit 3: Making the Familiar Foreign***

2/21-2/23

**TRAINING EXERCISE # 2: AN EXTRA-ORDINARY DAY**

"Body Ritual among the Nacirema."

Miner, Horace. *American Anthropologist New Series*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Jun., 1956), pp. 503-507

"Studying at Home: What you don't expect" in Starting Fieldwork: Methods and Experiences.

Marti, J.E. 2017. Waveland Press, Inc. pp. 11-16.

"How Native is a 'Native' Anthropologist?"

Narayan, Kirin. *American Anthropologist*. Sep. 1993; 95, 3: pp. 671-686.



***Unit 4: Positionality***

2/28-3/7

"The Perceiver and the Perceived" in Starting Fieldwork: Methods and Experiences.

Marti, J.E. 2017. Waveland Press, Inc. pp. 27-38.

"Autoethnography" in Starting Fieldwork: Methods and Experiences.

Marti, J.E. 2017. Waveland Press, Inc. pp. 107-112.

"The Limits of Auto-Ethnography".


Strathern, Marilyn. In Jackson, Anthony, ed. Anthropology at Home. 1987. Pp. 59-67.

\*\*\*\*\*Spring Break 3/9-3/21\*\*\*\*\*

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**Midterm Exam Due March 23rd**

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***Unit 5: In the Field***

3/23-5/4

**TRAINING EXERCISE # 3: FINDING A FIELDSITE**

"Breaking Anthropologists' Taboos" in Starting Fieldwork: Methods and Experiences.

Marti, J.E. 2017. Waveland Press, Inc. pp. 3-10.

**Relationships**

"How Should I Act in the Field" in Starting Fieldwork: Methods and Experiences.

Marti, J.E. 2017. Waveland Press, Inc. pp. 17-25.

On Ethnographic Authority

Clifford, James. *Representations*. Spring 1983; 2:pp. 118-146.

"Field Relations" in *Ethnography*.

Hammersley, Martyn and Atkinson, Paul, eds. 1995. Routledge: London and New York. pp. 80-123.

"Coming Home" in *Starting Fieldwork: Methods and Experiences*.

Marti, J.E. 2017. Waveland Press, Inc. pp. 113-114.

"Lovers in the Field: Sex, Dominance and the Female Anthropologist".

Dubisch, Jill. 1995. In *Taboo*. Kulick and Willson eds. Pp. 29-50.

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### *Concept Paper #3: Relationships*

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#### **Interviews**

"Interviews" in *Starting Fieldwork: Methods and Experiences*.

Marti, J.E. 2017. Waveland Press, Inc. pp. 67-76.

"Conversation & Interviewing" in *Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography*.

Madden, R. Sage Publications. pp. 64-75.

#### **Fieldnotes**

"Jottings" in *Starting Fieldwork: Methods and Experiences*.

Marti, J.E. 2017. Waveland Press, Inc. pp. 57-65.

"Description: Writing 'Down' Fieldnotes" in *Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography*.

Madden, R. Sage Publications. pp. 117-135.

"Notes on (Field)notes" in *Fieldnotes*.

Clifford, James. In Sanjek, Roger, ed. 1990. Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London. Pp. 47-70.

#### **Access**

"Access" in *Ethnography*.

Hammersley, Martyn and Atkinson, Paul. Eds. 1995. Routledge: London and New York. Pp. 54-79.

#### **Developing a Research Question**

#### **TRAINING EXERCISE # 4: WHERE IS MY QUESTION?**

Research Question Workshopping & Invited Guest Speakers

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### *Concept Paper #4: Research Questions*

### *Concept Paper #5: Peer Reviews*

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"Some Things We've Learned." in *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*.

Monaghan & Just. Oxford University Press. 2000. pp. 144-146.

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## **Final Exam Due May 11<sup>th</sup> by 10am**

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