

# Anthropological Field Methods

## Anthropology 4011

**Time:** Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30-4:50

**Place:** Environmental 190

**Instructor:** Andrew Nelson

**Office:** 330N Chilton Hall

**Office Hours:** Mondays 1-3; or by appointment

**E-Mail:** andrew.nelson@unt.edu

### Course Description:

In this course students learn the methodology of cultural anthropology by both thinking about and doing ethnography. The course is structured to give students a working knowledge of participant observation, qualitative methods, project design, interviewing skills, and ethnographic data analysis and writing. While reading and discussing different approaches to ethnography in the classroom, students will also conduct an ethnographic research project outside of the classroom. Students will work on their projects in class workshops and present their findings at the end of the course.



*Kitchen Stories* (2003, Norway)

### Learning Objectives:

1. Students will gain an understanding for the central methods and concepts of ethnographic fieldwork.
2. Students will select a field-site and design a research project suitable for conducting ethnographic research.

3. Students will learn the methodological tools of participant observation by conducting ethnographic research.
4. Students will learn how to analyze ethnographic data and convert it into a written ethnography.
5. Students will present the results of their research at a class conference and class publication.

### **Required Texts:**

1. Warren, Carol A.B. & Karner, Tracy X. (2015) *Discovering Qualitative Methods: Field Research, Interviews, and Analysis* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Oxford University Press.
2. All other course material can be downloaded from the course's Blackboard webpage under the tab "Course Material".

### **Course Requirements & Grading:**

#### **I. Attendance & Participation**

Students will be expected to attend every class and engage in class discussion. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Attendance and participation will count towards 15% of the final grade.

#### **II. Discussion Leader**

In groups of three, students will be asked to lead one class discussion on a pre-assigned topic with some additional readings or viewings. Discussion leaders will be expected to: 1. Provide a 5 minute presentation on the background of a certain person or topic; 2. Come prepared with a set of questions to inspire and manage a 10-15 minute discussion. All three students will receive the same grade. The quality of their led discussion will determine their grade which will count towards 5% of the final grade.

#### **III. Assignments**

Students will be asked to submit short assignments based on their research project: site selection, question statement, observations, and interviews. These exercises will count for 20% of the final grade (each assignment will be worth 5% of final grade).

#### **IV. Quizzes**

Students will take two quizzes during the course which will assess their knowledge of course material. The quizzes, counted together, will count for 25% of the final grade.

#### **V. Workshops**

Periodically (4 times), we will have 'workshop classes' in which students will meet with just half of the class for half of the time to discuss the status of their projects.

## VI. Published article & Conference Presentation

Based on analysis of research data, students will write a concise final paper of their project which will be published in a collection of articles devoted to the topic: 'The Anthropology of North Texas'. Students will present an abridged version of their article at a 'conference' devoted to the same topic. Together, the paper and presentation will count towards 35% of the final grade (25% for the article; 10% for the presentation).

### Grade Makeup

Attendance & Participation	15%
Discussion Leader	5%
Assignments	20% (4 x 5%)
Quizzes	25% (2 x 12.5%)
Article & Presentation	35% (25% for article, 10% for presentation)

All grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

<b>90-100%</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>80-89%</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>70-79%</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>60-69%</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>59-under</b>	<b>F</b>

### COURSE POLICIES

**1. Withdrawal:** If you are unable to complete this course you must officially withdraw by the University-designated date (for a "W" with instructor approval). Withdrawing from a course is a formal procedure that YOU must initiate. I cannot do it for you. If you simply stop attending and do not withdraw, you will receive a performance grade, usually an "F."

**2. Acceptable Student Behavior:** Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is

unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.deanofstudents.unt.edu](http://www.deanofstudents.unt.edu).

In this classroom, “**acceptable student behavior**” specifically means:

**A. No cell phone or computer usage. I will ask you to leave the classroom if I see you using your phone and ask you to turn off your computer.**

**B. Maintain one classroom conversation. Sometimes topics in anthropology classes can get socially controversial and emotionally exciting, but please contribute only to the central conversation.**

**C. Always be respectful of other students’ thoughts, opinions, and perspectives.**

**D. Do not come to class late. If you arrive more than 5 minutes after the start of class (3:35), you will be considered absent.**

**3. Submitting Course Work:** All coursework must be submitted physically in class. I will NOT accept work via email, so please do not send it. Late work will be accepted for reduced points. Late work will only be accepted for full credit if accompanied by a note from a medical professional. No other exceptions will be considered. If you cannot attend class on the due date, you can submit the work early.

**4. Quiz Policy:** There will be two quizzes in this course that will assess knowledge of course material. If you do the readings and attend class, you should have no problem earning an A on these quizzes. They will be relatively short 30 minute quizzes consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions. They will be open-note/book (but not open computer/phone). Quiz make-ups will not be granted unless students provide documentation signed by a medical professional attesting to their inability to attend class.

**Mark your calendar:**

**Quiz 1: February 24<sup>th</sup> (covering Intro unit and Units 1-2)**

**Quiz 2: April 21<sup>st</sup> (covering Units 3-5)**

**4. Academic Misconduct:** Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, sabotage and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. For information on the University’s policies regarding academic

integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/>.

**5. ADA:** The Anthropology Department does not discriminate based on an individual's disability, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Our program provides academic adjustments or help to individuals with disabilities, and attempts will be made to meet all certified requirements. Please see me if you have a documented disability so that appropriate arrangements can be made to help you get the most out of this class.

**6. Extra Credit:** There are two opportunities for extra credit. If you submit a SETE evaluation (April 20 – May 8), you will receive one percentage bonus point on your final grade. Additionally, if you attend a *relevant* (which needs to receive the approval of the professor before you attend) event (lecture, film, seminar) and write a 200 word synopsis, you will gain one bonus percentage point.

**7. Course Communication:** I expect you to check your UNT email on a regular basis as this will be the only format for all course communication outside of the classroom. I require 24 hours to respond to any emails sent between Monday and Friday. Over the weekends and on holidays I require 48 hours to respond. Please include the name of the course you are taking with me in the body of your email. I have over 300 students, and cannot remember which class each individual student is in. If you email me with a question that the syllabus answers, I will not reply to you. If you are writing an email from a mobile device, please remember to use a formal tone (salutations, full sentences, correct spelling and punctuation, signature).

**8. Personal technology use in the classroom:** During the class, I expect students to have computers and phones turned off. This is a small class and I expect everyone to engage with each other/not their digital devices!

### Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

#### Intro Unit: Why Anthropologists Rule (What is ethnography?)

Date	Topic	Discussion Leader Topic	Material Covered	Graded Work Due
January 20	Introduction to Course			
January 22	What is ethnography?		W/K: ch. 1	

#### Unit One: The Tricky Balance of being an Insider-Outsider (Field-site selection and Ethics)

Date	Topic	Discussion Leader Topic	Material Covered	Graded Work Due
<b>January 27</b>	The 'Field'	1. Borges: The Ethnographer	G/F: 1-46	
<b>January 29</b>	Selecting a site	2. Virtual ethnography	W/K: ch. 3	
<b>February 3</b>	Ethics	3. HTS: Military anthropologists	W/K: ch. 2	CITI training (not graded)
<b>February 5</b>	Case study		<i>Herskovits at the Heart of Blackness</i> (in class)	<b>Assignment #1: Site statement</b>
<b>February 10</b>	Roles and Relationships	4. Napoleon Chagnon	W/K: ch. 4	

**Unit Two: Don't ask a question to which you already know the answer (Research Design)**

Date	Topic	Discussion Leader Topic	Readings/Screenings	Graded Work Due
<b>February 12</b>	Research Questions	5. Margaret Mead	ET: ch. 1 (focus on pages 2-9)	
<b>February 17</b>	Research Design		ET: ch. 5 (formative research models)	
<b>February 19</b>	Workshop #1			<b>Assignment #2: Research model</b>

**Unit Three: Record Anything and Everything (Observation & Fieldnotes)**

Date	Topic	Discussion Leader Topic	Material Covered	Graded Work Due
<b>February 24</b>	People Watching		<i>Kitchen Stories</i> (in class)	<b>Quiz #1</b>
<b>February 26</b>	Participant Observation	6. Malinowski	Madden: chs. 4 & 5	
<b>March 3</b>	Field Notes	7. Boas	W/K: ch. 5	

<b>March 5</b>	Surveys		ET: ch. 9	
<b>March 10</b>	Workshop #2			<b>Assignment #2: Participant-Observation</b>
<b>March 12</b>	The Interview	8. Evans-Pritchard and Colonial Ethnography	W/K: chs. 6 & 7	

#### Unit Four: Interviews

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion Leader Topic</b>	<b>Material Covered</b>	<b>Graded Work Due</b>
<b>March 24</b>	Class Cancelled			
<b>March 26</b>	Class Cancelled			
<b>March 31</b>	Focus Groups	9. Marketing Anthropology	ET: ch. 8	
<b>April 2</b>	Workshop #3			<b>Assignment #3: Interview &amp; Analysis</b>

#### Unit Five: If you're not surprised by your answer, you need to rethink your data (Data analysis and writing-up)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion Leader Topic</b>	<b>Material Covered</b>	<b>Graded Work Due</b>
<b>April 7</b>	Analysis of Qualitative data		W/K: ch. 9	
<b>April 9</b>	Ethnographic writing	10. Writing Culture	W/K: ch. 10	
<b>April 7</b>	Other Data		Angrosino: ch. 6	
<b>April 16</b>	Workshop #4			
<b>April 21</b>	Ethnographic		View: <i>Stories we</i>	<b>Quiz #2</b>

	Truth		<i>tell</i>	
<b>April 23</b>	Ethnographic 'confession' and 'impressionism'		Van Mannen: 73- 124 <i>Finish Stories we tell</i>	

**Final Unit: What must the World know about your Research?**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>April 28</b>	Day 1 Practice
<b>April 30</b>	Day 2 Practice
<b>May 5</b>	Day 3 Practice
<b>May 7</b>	Day 4 Practice
<b>May 8</b>	Class Conference Venue and Time: TBA

**Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>: Final Article due by 5pm**