

# ANTH 5032.810-820 Ethnographic and Qualitative Methods for Non-Anthropology Majors Spring 2015 Online

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will teach students ethnographic fieldwork methods, building on any prior experience they may have. Students will learn through readings and discussion, and by conducting a semester-long fieldwork project. They will become familiar with both traditional long-term fieldwork approaches and rapid assessment techniques used in applied anthropology. Topics covered include: the relationship of research to theory, designing a project, ethics, data collection, analysis of data, and presentation of findings. Each student will conduct a mini-ethnographic research project using the following fieldwork approaches: participant observation, semi-structured interviewing, and focus groups. With regard to data analysis, students will learn about software, and engage in collaborative teamwork.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no required textbooks for you to purchase. We will utilize electronic journals from the UNT library and selected chapters from the following books:

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

Esterberg, Kristin  
2002 Qualitative Methods in Social Research. Boston: McGraw Hill.

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Jean J. Schensul  
1999 Designing and conducting ethnographic research. Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 1. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press. (Referred to in Course Schedule as TK V1)

Schensul, Stephen L, Jean J. Schensul and Margaret D. LeCompte  
1999 Essential ethnographic methods. Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 2. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press. (Referred to in Course Schedule as TK V2)

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Jean J. Schensul  
1999 Analyzing and interpreting ethnographic data. Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 5. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press. (Referred to in Course Schedule as TK V5)

You should know how to perform a literature search for electronic resources. You may find the following e-journals and databases helpful; they are available full text through the UNT library: *Qualitative Inquiry*, *Qualitative Health Research*, *Qualitative Market Research*, *Qualitative Research*, *Qualitative Research Journal*, *Qualitative Sociology*, *Ethnography*, *Ethnography and Education*, Anthrosource (full text database), EbscoHost (database)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Course pace:** This is a fast-paced course. It is in your best interest to maintain active communication with me, especially during the research project, so that you do not get behind.

*Note:* Please turn in all assignments as a word document as I will make comments in your document and return the assignment to you in the assignment drop box of the course. I will take the time to provide detailed comments about your writing and research; I expect you to **read** the comments and **incorporate** them into your future assignments. This is extremely important during the fieldwork project.

**1. Assignments (20%):** You will have writing assignments for lessons 1-5. These assignments involve reading an article about the lesson topic and either posting a discussion response to the discussion questions or writing an abstract about it. The goals are to read scholarly articles about methods, enhance your writing skills and ability to explain something you've just read, and to foster class discussion. Specific instructions for each assignment are located within the lessons. Assignments are due by 11:59pm (central time) on the due date located in the lessons and syllabus. *I reserve the right to deduct one letter grade for each day an assignment is late.* Please let me know if you have any questions.

**Readings:** Make sure you keep up and complete all of the readings. We may not go over every word of the readings in the course lesson, but this does not make them any less important than what is discussed in class. Since you are in a graduate course, I expect you to take initiative and read what has been assigned.

**E-journals and Electronic Databases:** E-journals are electronic journals to which the library subscribes. To access e-journals, go to <http://www.library.unt.edu/>, click on e-journals, and then type the name of the journal for which you are looking. You may also find the electronic database 'Anthrosource' to be of help when doing your literature search. (You need to access electronic databases through the library to get full text access to most journal articles so you can't just google 'Anthrosource' and enter the database from the internet.)

**Discussions and Abstract Guidelines:** This is a graduate seminar and participation is essential. Read each lesson and assigned reading and then participate in the online discussion. For each lesson you will need to respond to a discussion topic and/or will write an abstract. As we get more involved in the research projects beginning in lesson 6, you will not have required discussion posts for each lesson.

Specific instructions for each assignment are located within the lessons. If the assignment is to respond to a discussion topic, go to the discussion board and locate the specific lesson. Discussion topics will be posted by me for each week; the first message in each discussion thread will contain the topic, so open the message, read the topic, and then type up your response in a word processing program (this will ensure you do not lose your work, as you can't save in the discussion message boxes and will also allow you to check your spelling, etc. before posting).

After you have typed up your original thoughts, return to the discussion and read what others have written. Cut and paste your message into a new discussion thread (no attachments please), and make changes to what you have written to reflect that you have read the messages of others. For example, if someone has posted thoughts similar to yours, acknowledge that person's post by saying, "As So and So wrote earlier,..." or "Like So-and-So observed, I think XYZ,...but my take on ABC is a little different in that I believe..." You don't need to respond in detail to these others in your original topic post, but only to acknowledge them, as you would in a face-to-face discussion.

Remember that this is a discussion, not a collection of isolated monologues. This is the most interactive element of the course and an opportunity for us to come together as a supportive learning community. This is not to say that you can't disagree with others or post ideas radically different than those being expressed by others; but respect and courtesy are important aspects of any fruitful discussion, and no one should ever feel attacked or cornered in a class discussion, whether that discussion takes place face-to-face or in this more anonymous realm. Be persuasive when expressing your views, not bullying or hostile. Persuasive writing, like persuasive speech, makes use of evidence, supports generalizations, and demonstrates a desire to really see the points others are making before you decide on how to respond.

Please follow the abstract guidelines for your writing assignments. Detailed instructions and links to the abstract guidelines are embedded in the lessons.

**2. "Attendance" and participation in virtual discussions (10%):** Since this course is a graduate seminar, class participation makes up 10% of your final grade. You will be required to make comments to your classmates' assignments in the discussion board. For most lessons, your original assignment is due Wednesday and your comments to classmates' posts are due Saturday by midnight. Specific instructions for each assignment are located within the lessons.

Five percent of your attendance grade is based on your feedback to your other group members' fieldwork project. Your group members will fill out a grading rubric based on the quality and timeliness of your comments and constructive feedback at the end of the semester. If you do not fill out the grading rubric for your other team members, you will lose this 5% of your grade.

**3. Fieldwork project (70%):** Students will conduct a qualitative research project over the course of the semester. You will design the project, write the interview and focus group questions, collect data via observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups, code and analyze the data, and write up the project in a report. There will be many times in this course when there is very heavy collaboration, cooperation, and discussion. Be sure to look ahead on the syllabus to see when project assignments are due so you can manage your time wisely. Each assignment research design, observation, interviews, etc., builds upon previous work. Be sure to **read and incorporate** my and your classmates' comments into your next project assignment. Several assignments will be used to document and evaluate your fieldwork:

Item	% of Grade
Research Design	5%
Observation 1 fieldnotes	5%
Observation 2 fieldnotes	5%
Observation 3 fieldnotes	5%
Interview 1 transcript	7%
Interview 1 fieldnotes & reflections	3%
Interview 2 transcript	7%
Interview 2 fieldnotes & reflections	3%
Focus group transcript	7%
Focus group fieldnotes & reflections	3%
Coding and analysis	5%
Final report	15%

**Group feedback:** In this course, you will be put into groups to receive feedback on the design and implementation of your research project. I will create groups with 3 students each. You are not doing a collaborative research project; rather members of your team will provide constructive feedback on your individual research project. In this way, you can receive comments from scholars other than me and you will have the chance to see how other scholars conduct research. The quality and timeliness of your constructive feedback to group members will make up 5% of your total grade. If you do not fill out the assessment for your fellow team members, you will lose the 5% feedback grade. See the research project section on the home page for specific instructions.

**Announcements and important information:** It is important that you read my announcements and my bulletin board posts. I have created a bulletin board topic called **Important Messages** and I will post all announcements and answer all questions for the entire class here. Because I use the “announcement” tool very frequently in this class, it is very important that you turn your pop-up blocker off for Blackboard use.

**Bio Statement and picture:** Your first assignment is to post a bio statement on the Welcome and Introductions discussion board. Building community is an important aspect of this class and posting a bio statement is the first step to getting to know each other. Bio statements must be posted by **11:59pm (central time), Friday, Jan. 23.**

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

### Welcome Tue, Jan. 20 – Introduction to the Course

<p><b>Readings</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Syllabus</li> <li>2. Welcome Page</li> </ol>	<p><b>Assignment</b></p> <p>Your first assignment is to post a bio statement on the Welcome and Introductions discussion board by <b>11:59pm (central time), Friday, Jan. 23.</b> Your bio statement should include: your name, where you live, your degree program, your academic interests, and personal interests. Also include information about your research experience - qualitative and/or quantitative. Finally, attach a recent picture of yourself so we can get a visual!</p>
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### Lesson 1 – Mon, Jan. 26 – Ethnography and Anthropology

<p><b>Readings</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TK Vol 1, chapters 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>2. Shweder, Richard A. 1997 The Surprise of Ethnography, <i>Ethos</i>, 25(2): 152-163.</li> <li>3. Sofaer, Shoshanna 1999 Qualitative Methods: What Are They and Why Use Them? <i>Health Services Research</i> 34(5 part II): 1101-1118.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Assignment</b></p> <p>Your original posts on the topics are due <b>Wed, Jan. 28.</b> Your substantive comments on 2 classmates' posts are due <b>Fri, Jan. 30.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What were some of the methodological tools discussed in the articles? How do these articles position the authority and validity of ethnographic and qualitative methods?</li> <li>2. In Shweder (1997), what does the author mean when he writes, "What makes a good ethnography "work" is the "suspension of disbelief" in which you do not assume that you know everything in advance and thereby permit yourself to experience the reframing of the "really real." How is this approach different than a quantitative approach?</li> <li>3. Your readings discuss definitions of ethnography and how anthropological frameworks must be incorporated. What essential perspectives or understandings must be included?</li> </ol>
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## Lesson 2 – Mon, Feb. 2 – Social Science Research Methods

<b>Readings</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Esterberg, Kristin 2002 Qualitative Methods in Social Research. Boston: McGraw Hill. Chapter 1</li><li>2. One article from the "Social Science and Ethnography list"</li></ol>	<b>Assignment</b> <p>Your abstract post is due <b>Wed, Feb. 4</b>. Your substantive comments on 2 classmates' abstracts are due <b>Fri, Feb. 6</b>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Each student will read one article from the Social Science and Ethnography list. Following the abstract guidelines and sample, write a 500-700 word abstract summarizing, analyzing and discussing the article's major points. Post your assignment to the discussion topic <b>Social Research Abstract</b> in Lesson 2 as an attachment.</li></ol>
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## Lesson 3 – Mon, Feb. 9 – Theory and Epistemology

<b>Readings</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. TK Vol 1, chapter 3</li><li>2. TK Vol 2, chapter 2</li><li>3. Third article, your choice</li></ol>	<b>Assignment</b> <p>Your original posts on the topics are due <b>Wed, Feb. 11</b>. Your substantive comments on any 2 classmates' posts are due <b>Fri, Feb. 13</b>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Think about the different traditions you have just read about. Which ones seem best suited to your research and why? With regards to your discipline and specific topic of interest, what theories and paradigms are most often used and why? What kinds of data would you get if you adopted a different paradigm?</li><li>2. Find a written report of a <b>qualitative</b> research project in an academic anthropology journal (sample qualitative journals listed on page 1 of syllabus). Find an article and decipher which theoretical paradigm the researcher used in the study. Read the article carefully, noting the influences of a particular theoretical paradigm. Does the researcher discuss the chosen paradigm or any other biases at the beginning of the article? Can you identify how the chosen theoretical paradigm influenced particular research methods? Following the abstract guidelines and sample, write a 500-700 word abstract. Post your essay to the discussion board under the lesson 3 <b>Theory and Epistemology Abstract</b> as an attachment. This will allow your fellow students to read it and make comments.</li></ol>
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## Lesson 4 – Mon, Feb. 16 – Ethics and Research

<b>Readings</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Esterberg, Kristin, chapter 3</li><li>2. TK Vol 1, chapter 9</li><li>3. One article from the "Ethics Article" list</li></ol>	<b>Assignment</b> <p>Your original posts on the topics are due <b>Wed, Feb. 18</b>. Your substantive comments on any 2 classmates' posts are due <b>Fri, Feb. 20</b>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Think about the ethical situations that your research topic may pose. Identify and discuss some of these situations and how you may handle them.</li><li>2. Ethics and Research Abstract For this assignment, each student will read one article from the "Ethics Article" list and write an abstract. Following the abstract guidelines and sample, write a 500-700 word abstract summarizing, analyzing and discussing its major points. Post your assignment to the lesson 4 discussion topic <b>Ethics and Research Abstract as an attachment. This will allow your fellow students</b></li></ol>
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	<p><b>to read it and make comments.</b></p> <p>3. Write one consent form for your interviews and focus groups. You should follow the sample consent form on the IRB website. There is also a sample consent form in the lesson. Turn in your consent form to the drop box in the assignments folder by <b>Fri, Feb 20.</b></p>
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**Lesson 5 – Mon, Feb. 23 – Research Design Part I**

<p><b>Readings</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TK Vo 1, chapters 4 and 5</li> <li>2. One research proposal from the list</li> </ol>	<p><b>Assignment</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Introduction to your research topic</b>        In this assignment, you will write a brief introduction to your qualitative research project for the class, no more than 1 page. I want you to incorporate the concepts and ideas we have discussed thus far in this course. For example, include your general research question and how literature informs your design. If you are choosing a topic that you are currently researching (or will research) for your thesis or dissertation be sure to look at the topic from different theoretical frameworks than are typically used in your discipline. Remember, the point of this course is to learn new ways of seeing and researching the phenomenon in question. Please post this on the lesson 5 discussion board by <b>Wed, Feb. 25.</b></li>   <li style="text-align: center;"><b>Next week you will turn in your research design, complete with specific research questions or aims, theoretical orientation, sample and sampling strategy. The guidelines for this assignment are posted in lesson 6.</b></li>   <li>2. For the second assignment, each student will read one research proposal and write an abstract. Please post it to the lesson 5 discussion board by <b>Wed, Feb. 25.</b> I have listed 13 proposals in the lesson.       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Once you have chosen a proposal to review, write a 500-700 word abstract highlighting the topic and research design. <b>Describe the research design. Is there a clearly stated theoretical orientation? What are the main research questions? What is the population? How was the sample selected? What are the methods that will be used? Does the project seem feasible?</b> Make comments on what you thought was good or bad based on the assigned readings. You don't need to follow the abstract guidelines for this assignment since the focus on your discussion should be on methods and project design rather than a summary of the article.</li> </ul> </li>   <li>3. Finally, post comments on any 2 classmates' research design ideas posts by <b>Fri, Feb. 27.</b></li> </ol>
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### Lesson 6 – Mon, Mar. 2 – Research Design Part II

<b>Readings</b> 1. TK Vol 2, chapter 3	<b>Assignment</b> 1. Your research design is due to your group and to the “Research Design” drop box off in the course homepage by <b>Wed, Mar. 4</b> . See lesson assignment for guidelines. 2. Provide feedback to your group members about their research design by <b>Fri, Mar. 6</b> . 3. You will not have any more required discussion posts for the remainder of the course.
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### Lesson 7 – Mon, Mar. 9 – Participant Observation

<b>Readings</b> 1. TK Vol 2, chapter 5 2. Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, chapters 1, 2, 4 3. Review the sample fieldnotes	<b>Assignment</b> 1. You will conduct three participant observations, a minimum of 1 hour each time. Your fieldnotes from each observation are due: 1 <sup>st</sup> set of fieldnotes due <b>Fri, Mar. 13</b> ; 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> set of fieldnotes due <b>Wed, Mar. 25</b> Please see lesson 7 for complete instructions. Post all fieldnotes to the assignment drop box off the course homepage; send your best set of fieldnotes to your group. 2. Provide feedback to your group members about their fieldnotes by <b>Fri, Mar. 27</b> .
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**March 16-20 – Spring Break!** Be safe and have fun!

### Lesson 8 – Mon, Mar. 23 – Writing Fieldnotes

<b>Readings</b> 1. See lesson 7	<b>Assignment</b> 1. See lesson 7 Your 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> set of fieldnotes due <b>Wed, Mar. 25</b> Feedback to group members due <b>Fri, Mar. 27</b>
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### Lesson 9 – Mon, Mar. 30 – Interviews and Writing Interview Questions

<b>Readings</b> 1. TK Vol 2, chapters 6 and 7 2. Bernard, chapter 9	<b>Assignment</b> 1. Your interview questions are due <b>Wed, Apr. 1</b> to your group and to the “Interview Questions” drop box in the Assignment folder. 2. Comments to your group members on their interview questions are due by <b>Fri, Apr. 3</b> .
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### Lesson 10 – Mon. Apr. 6– Interviewing

<b>Readings</b> <i>None</i>	<b>Assignment</b> Conduct two interviews and post comments to your group members on one interview.  1. By <b>Fri, Apr. 10</b> a) Post Interview transcript 1 and Fieldnotes for Interview 1 in assignment folder drop box.
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	<p>b) Send Interview Transcript 1 to group.</p> <p>2. By <b>Wed, Apr. 15</b> –</p> <p>a) Post Interview transcript 2 and Fieldnotes for Interview 2 in assignment folder drop box.</p> <p>b) Post comments to your group members on one interview.</p>
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**Lesson 11 – Mon, Apr. 13 – Focus Groups**

<p><b>Readings</b></p> <p>1. Focus Group Manual</p>	<p><b>Assignment</b></p> <p>1. Your focus group questions are due <b>Fri, Apr. 17</b> to the assignment drop box.</p> <p>2. You do not need to submit your focus group questions to your group members.</p>
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**Lesson 12 Mon, Apr. 20 – Conducting Focus Groups**

<p><b>Readings</b></p> <p>None</p>	<p><b>Assignment</b></p> <p>1. Conduct one focus group. Your focus group transcript and fieldnotes are due by <b>Fri, Apr. 24</b> to the assignment drop box.</p> <p>2. You do not need to submit your focus group transcript to your group members.</p>
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**Lesson 13 – Mon, Apr. 27 – Data Analysis and Coding**

<p><b>Readings</b></p> <p>1. Esterberg, chapter 8</p>	<p><b>Assignment</b></p> <p>1. You will begin to code your data this week. Your assignment is to print and read all of your data – observation notes, transcripts, fieldnotes of interviews and the focus group. Read them several times and get familiar with the data.</p> <p>2. Open code the data and create a detailed code list (see lesson and examples)</p> <p>3. Turn in your code list by <b>Fri, May 1</b> in the assignment folder drop box “Code List” and to your group. Comment on your group members code lists by <b>Wed, May 6</b>.</p>
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**Lesson 14 – Mon, May 4 – Data Analysis and Coding II**

<p><b>Readings</b></p> <p>None</p>	<p><b>Assignment</b></p> <p>1. Please fill out the SETE and two assessments off the home page.</p> <p>2. Finish coding and analysis</p> <p>3. Final report due <b>Wed, May 13</b> to the assignment drop box.</p>
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*Note: The instructor reserves the right to add, delete, or revise segments of this course or syllabus*

**Withdrawal and Incompletes:** If you are unable to complete this course you must withdraw. Withdrawing from a course is a formal procedure which **YOU** must initiate. If you simply stop attending and do not withdraw, you will receive a performance grade, usually an F.” **I will not give an incomplete unless you meet the requirements outlined by the university:** <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/academic-record-incomplete.html>



**Statement on Plagiarism and Cheating:** The department of anthropology holds graduate students to the highest ethical standards of practicing professionals. They are expected to follow the American Anthropological Association's code of ethics: *"Anthropological researchers bear responsibility for the integrity and reputation of their discipline, of scholarship, and of science. Thus, anthropological researchers are subject to the general moral rules of scientific and scholarly conduct: they should not deceive or knowingly misrepresent (i.e., fabricate evidence, falsify, and plagiarize), or attempt to prevent reporting of misconduct, or obstruct the scientific/scholarly research of others"* (<http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>).

The Anthropology Department does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Our program provides academic adjustments or help to individuals with disabilities in its programs and activities. Attempts will be made to meet all certified requirements.

**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 Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities 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.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr)