

ANTH 4011: Anthropological Field Methods

T/TH 2:00-3:20pm

WH 313

Anthropological Field Methods is a course in how anthropologists “do” anthropology. Every discipline is defined according to their own distinct search for knowledge. For example, psychologists may find knowledge through statistics while biologists test out hypotheses. However, the manner in which a researcher investigates, in terms of their/her/his research methods, is not just about the way they/she/he gathers data and information. Rather, research methods are instrumental in *creating* the very knowledge they are often purported only to discover. This course engages with the methods of anthropological thinking, especially in terms of how the ethnographer/interlocutor relationship informs how questions over “culture” are both found and framed.

Instructor

Professor Nelson (she/her/ella)

melissa.nelson@unt.edu

940.369.8449

ZOOM ID: [9403698449](#)

Office Hours

T/TH 1-2pm

Sycamore 120

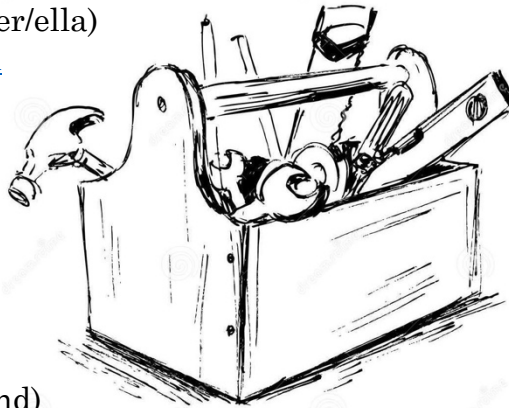
Required Materials:

Composition Book (Bound)

Participant Notebook (Small)

Barracoon (2018) by Zora Neal Hurston

ISBN 978-0-06-274821-8



Grade

Breakdown

Attendance 10%

Synthesis 15%

Exercises 15%

Papers 15%

Presentation 20%

Ethnographic
Experience 25%

Grading Scale

A 90-100 D 60-69

B 80-89 F <60

C 70-79

Learning Objectives

- Students will acquire ethnographic soft skills that include engaging an interlocutor community, interviewing, and assessing the anthropological value of those experiences.
- Students will be able to think critically about the power and process of research. They will be able to contextualize current research approaches within a (problematic) legacy of anthropological research methods and discuss how research methods are dynamic tools in processes of power.
- Students will be able to critically reflect upon their own positionality both personally and as an ethnographic research student.
- Students will learn how to write ethnographic analyses in ways that are thoughtful, succinct, and anthropological.
- Students will practice collaboration and participation skills, gaining the experience of how to produce and present knowledge within an academic community.

Course Organization

As an in-person class, this course develops an understanding for anthropological methods through a collaborative and discussion-based approach which requires students to be present. **Assignments/assessments will be handed out in-class and submissions will be accepted only in-class unless otherwise noted.** *Canvas* will be used as a supplemental resource for readings/resources, announcements, and recording grades. Modules/materials will be published in synchronicity with our in-class meetings. In other words, you will not have access to full course materials as you would in an online, asynchronous class. *Students are encouraged to engage with/work through the following online materials on Canvas prior to the start of a unit:*

- **“Good to Think” Questions** (to keep in mind as we engage with unit themes)
- **Required Reading for the Unit** (with Author Pictures & Context)

Assessments Policy

Missing assignments as a result of an unexcused absence will result in a 0. Attempts at late submission, or assessments submitted in alternate ways (i.e. in-class v. email), will not be accepted. Make-up opportunities will only be considered with an approved and documented excused absence (see *Assessments/Attendance* below). Make-up work will be due the class meeting immediately following the excused absence(s) unless otherwise expressly determined by the instructor in writing.

Assessments

Attendance

10%

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. If possible, it is advised that students communicate with the professor prior to being absent, so you and the professor can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals.

Attendance grades will be calculated according to the table below. ALL absences will be counted **unexcused** unless documentation of a [university approved absence](#) is provided to the instructor in writing within 48 hours of the missed class.

Synthesis

15%

Students will be randomly assigned to small group “recitations”, where they will 1) discuss the week’s themes and 2) **synthesize** their thoughts, readings, and discussions. Student recitations will be assessed through a SYNTHESIS worksheet that will be due (through Canvas) by the end of class. A group grade will be assessed based on the criteria below. More detailed instructions will be provided in class.

Attendance Grade	Points	Unexcused Absences
A	100	0
A	90	1-2
B	80	3-5
C	70	6-8
D	60	9-11
F	50	12+

Attendance

Points Entered	Category
20	Comprehensive: Above and Beyond
17	Well Done: Meets Expectations
15	Fair: Good Effort
12	Lacking: Needs Improvement
0	No Submission

Synthesis

Exercises**15%**

Students will be required to independently participate in exercises outside of class that are designed to elicit an experiential understanding of the themes we are exploring in-class. Exercises may include submissions of a creative nature (poetry, writing, art). Further details will be provided in-class.

Papers**15%**

You will be asked to submit **300-500 word** papers at the end of key units/themes. These essays should be informed by lectures, discussions, and readings. I will be looking for a polished writing sample with a clear thesis, argument, and properly cited references. Your argument needs to offer something more than a summary or editorial.

Ethnographic Experience**25%**

Students will be required to independently seek out an interlocutor community (pre-approved by the instructor). The goal of this experience is for students to practice participant-observation and reach a level of cultural intimacy with their interlocutors that allows for a deeper and more complex understanding of how a community makes sense of the world and each other. Students are expected to spend time with their interlocutors outside of class-time and are required to dedicate an average of 2-3 days a week (averaging 4-6 hrs. a week) to them. The *Ethnographic Experience* portion of your grade will be based on the following individual assessments (further details will be provided in class):

- Interlocutor Community Proposal
- Field-Notes Journal with Time Logs
- The “Art” of Cultural Intimacy
- Comment Map
- Getting Ethnographic
- Interlocutor Community Assessment of Anthro-Student

Presentation**20%**

Your final project will be an in-class presentation on the culmination of your ethnographic experience. You will be asked to position your ethnographic experience in conversation with the themes we discussed on anthropological field methods. Students will be assessed on creativity/originality, depth of their ethnographic experience, and ability to bring that full-circle with the larger issues of anthropological research. Further details will be provided in class.

External Time Commitment






Anthropological field methods requires an embodied understanding not only of what it means to “do” anthropology, but of what it is to “experience” being an anthropologist. To that end, this course is unique in that it requires both substantial time commitments outside of the classroom in addition to experiences and relationships which may prove to be outside of a student’s comfort zone. In addition to the regular time demands drawn from homework, this course requires a significant increase in time committed outside of our class meetings. **Students are expected to independently seek out an approved interlocutor community and dedicate between 4-6 hours per week (spread across 2-3 days) to spending time with them.** In addition, students will be required to conduct exercises outside of class time that will demand planning, availability, and flexibility that will also challenge the boundaries of their comfort zone. Flexibility will be considered for students holding O.D.A. letters with accommodations that directly relate to assignment demands.

Semester Schedule*

PERSPECTIVE (1/17-1/26)		
Methods: You Are How You Research		
1/17	Introduction to the Course	
1/19	Class Discussion-"The Ethnographer's Eye"	
1/24	In Class Activity: Nacirema	
1/26	Class Discussion-"They Are How We Research"	Due: Exercise on Perspective Barracoon: xi-xxx
PARTICIPATION (1/31-3/23)		
Participant-Observation: How We Do What We Do		
1/31	Introduction to Part-Obs/Interlocutor Proposals	Due: Paper on Perspective
2/2	Recitation	Due: Inter. Com. Proposal Due: Synthesis #1 (In-Class)
2/7	Class Discussion-"The Devil's in the Details"	Barracoon: 3-42
2/9	In Class Activity-Getting To Know You Real(it)y	
2/14	Recitation	Due: Synthesis #2 (In-Class)
2/16	Class Discussion-"Being Present v. Being There"	Barracoon: 43-81
2/21	In Class Activity-E.E. Round Robin	Due: Exercise on Participation
2/23	In Class Activity-Art Day!	Due: "Art" of Cultural Intimacy
2/28	Guest Speaker: REMOTE	
3/2	In Class Activity-Games Day!	
3/7	Class Discussion-"If You Know, You Know"	Barracoon: 83-113
3/9	Embodied Experience: OUT OF CLASS	Due: Comment Maps
3/14	Spring Break: NO CLASS	
3/16	Spring Break: NO CLASS	
3/21	In Class Activity: Somethin' To Talk About	Due: Paper on Participation
3/23	Recitation	Due: Synthesis #3 (In-Class)
POWER (3/28-5/4)		
A Reckoning: Wrestling with Our Disciplinary Legacy		
3/28	Class Discussion-"Rooted in Racism"	Barracoon: 117-154
3/30	NO CLASS	
4/4	Class Discussion-"Taking Stock"	Due: Exercise on Power Barracoon: 175-201
4/6	Recitation	Due: Synthesis #4 (In-Class)
4/11	Workshop-Presentation VISUAL	Due: Getting Ethnographic
4/13	Workshop-Presentation MAP	Due: Inter. Com. Assessments
4/18	Workshop-Presentation QUESTION	Due: Paper on Power
4/20	Presentations	
4/25	Presentations	
4/27	Presentations	
5/2	Presentations	
5/4	Presentations	

**Please access learning materials via CANVAS. This schedule and its contents are subject to change. Check CANVAS announcements for updates.*

ASSESSMENTS KEY

	Synthesis x 4 (15%)		Exercises x 3 (15%)
	Presentation x 1 (20%)		Papers x 3 (15%)
	Ethnographic Experience x 6 (25%)		

NB! *Field-Notes & Time Logs will be collected & assessed in-class @ random.*

UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. Any student suspected of cheating in this course will receive at the very least a 0 on the assignment or up to an F in the course. A report of academic integrity violation shall be filed against the student with UNT and the student will have an opportunity to appeal the decision according to UNT's appeal process.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the [ODA website \(https://disability.unt.edu/\)](https://disability.unt.edu/).

Transmission and Recording of Student Images in Electronically-Delivered Courses

1. No permission is needed from a student for his or her image or voice to be transmitted live via videoconference or streaming media, but all students should be informed when courses are to be conducted using either method of delivery.
2. In the event an instructor records student presentations, he or she must obtain permission from the student using a signed release in order to use the recording for future classes in accordance with the Use of Student-Created Work guidelines above.
3. Instructors who video-record their class lectures with the intention of re-using some or all of recordings for future class offerings must notify students on the course syllabus if students' images may appear on video. Instructors are also advised to provide accommodation for students who do not wish to appear in class recordings.

No notification is needed if only audio and slide capture is used or if the video only records the instructor's image. However, the instructor is encouraged to let students know the recordings will be available to them for study purposes.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to CANVAS for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Community Support

Eagle Dreamers

<https://www.unt.edu/daca>

Questions: dacainfo@northtexasdreamteam.org

Workshops: immi.gr/dacaupdates

Opening Doors International Services: <https://www.odisinc.org/>

United We Dream: <https://unitedwedream.org/>

First Generation Success Center

<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/first-generation-success-center>

UNT Student Legal Services

<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>

Black Lives Matter

<https://ied.unt.edu/UNTBLM>

Pride Alliance

<https://ied.unt.edu/pridealliance>

Food Pantry presented by Kroger

<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/food-pantry>

Supply Pantry

<https://learningcenter.unt.edu/school-supply-pantry>

Voting

votedenton.com

COVID Information

[Student Health and Wellness Center Walk-In Vaccination Information](#)

Department of Anthropology Statement on Anti-Racism

Education is transformative, and open intellectual inquiry is the foundation of a university education and a democratic society. In the spirit of shared humanity and concern for our community and world, the Department of Anthropology faculty celebrate diversity as central to our mission and affirm our solidarity with those individuals and groups most at risk. In line with our departmental goals, we disavow all racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, classism, ableism, and hate speech or actions that attempt to silence, threaten, and degrade others. In our classrooms, all students are welcome regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, Veteran status, citizenship status, nationality, and other diverse identities that we each bring to class. As educators, we affirm that language and texts, films, and stories help us understand the experiences of others whose lives are different from ours. We value critical reasoning, evidence-based arguments, self-reflection, and the imagination. Building on these capacities, we hope to inspire empathy, social and environmental justice, and an ethical framework for our actions. We advocate for a diverse campus, community, and nation inclusive of racial minorities, women, immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community, and people of all religious faiths. The Department of Anthropology is committed to supporting our students and fostering an environment free of bias, discrimination, and harassment, in the classroom and the broader university community. Any member of our community can report an issue to the department chair anonymously. <https://anthropology.unt.edu/resources/report-departmental-issue>