

## ETHNOGRAPHIC AND QUALITATIVE METHODS

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ANTH 5031 Online □ University of North Texas  
Dr. Andrew Nelson  
Fall 2019

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will teach students anthropological 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. The class will focus on the following fieldwork approaches: observation, interviewing, and focus groups. With regard to data analysis, students will learn about software, and engage in collaborative teamwork.

**Communication with Instructor:** if you are in Denton, my office is in the basement of GAB 110C. My office hours are Thursdays 10am-noon CST. I would also be happy to talk at other times on Zoom or over the phone. You can make an appointment by emailing me at [andrew.nelson@unt.edu](mailto:andrew.nelson@unt.edu) or calling me at 940-369-7854 (messages go to my email).

**Zoom:** There will be times during the semester that we will need to get-together at the same time. We will select a meeting time at the orientation on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. I don't expect a phone call to be necessary each week. However, we will definitely need to meet at the following times (all regular/non-presentation calls at 7:30 pm CST):

- research design phase (September 23)
- proposal presentation **with client** (September 25, 2pm CST)
- Interview and focus group questions phase (October 7)
- Coding phase (November 4)
- Analysis (November 11)
- Presentation dress rehearsal (December 9)
- Final presentation **with client** (December 11, noon CST)

### REQUIRED TEXTS

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Jean J. Schensul.

2010 Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research: An Introduction. Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press. (Referred to in Course Schedule as TKV1)

Jean J. Schensul and Margaret D. LeCompte.

2012 Essential Ethnographic Methods: A Mixed Methods Approach. Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press. (Referred to in Course Schedule as TK V3)

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Jean J. Schensul.

2012 Analysis and Interpretation of Ethnographic Data: A Mixed Methods Approach. Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press. (Referred to in Course Schedule as TK V5)

**Note about textbooks:** These 3 books are part of a 5-volume set called The Ethnographer's Toolkit, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition series. Make sure to buy the 2<sup>nd</sup> editions of these books. There was a 1<sup>st</sup> edition series published in

1999. Some of the books in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition series are a different from the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition series. For example, what is now volume 3 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition series used to be volume 2 in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition series. It can get confusing if you are trying to work from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition series.

**Reading:** Make sure you keep up with and complete all of the readings. Since you are in a graduate course, I expect you to take initiative and read what has been assigned. This, of course, will benefit your career as an anthropologist!

**E-journals and Canvas:** Some of the articles are available through e-journals and some of them are available directly on Canvas. E-journals are electronic journals to which the library subscribes. To access articles and journals, go to <http://www.library.unt.edu> (also direct link on course homepage). You then must locate the specific article you need. Articles that are not available through e-journals have been scanned and added directly to Canvas. You should be able to click the link and access the article immediately.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 1. Discussion Posts** (9 posts and responses; 25% of final grade): The discussion board will serve as the main assignment submission site for the first half of the class. On it, you will post and respond to methods-related questions and project-relevant exercises. Specific instructions for each discussion are located within the lessons. Discussions posts are due by 11:59 pm (CST) on Sunday evenings, and two responses are due on Mondays at 11:59 pm CST.
- 2. Abstract assignments** (4 abstracts and responses; 20% of final grade): The goal of these assignments 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. Abstracts are due on Sunday evenings at 11:59 pm CST, and two responses to classmates are due on Mondays at 11:59 pm CST.
- 3. Fieldwork project assignments** (9 assignments; 25% of final grade). Students will conduct a collaborative project over the course of the semester. For each part of the project (proposal, observations, interviews, focus groups, analysis, writing) several assignments will be used to document and evaluate your fieldwork. They will be due Sunday evenings at 11:59 pm CST.
- 4. Project Writing** (5 written assignments; 20% of final grade). Students will be evaluated for their contribution to the project's research proposal and final report.
- 5. Participation in Zoom Calls/Presentations** (5 calls, 2 presentations; 10% of final grade). Attendance and participation in our five Zoom calls is strongly encouraged. If you absolutely cannot make the calls, contact the instructor prior to the call and offer an alternative form of communication/participation. Attendance and participation in the two presentations for the client (proposal on 9/25; final on 12/11) is mandatory.

## Grade Scale

90-100% = A  
80-89% = B  
70-79% = C  
60-69% = D  
59% or below = F

## PROJECT

We will be conducting a live project in this class on affordable housing issues for a real client, New America (info found in Canvas). This is going to take a large amount of collaboration and cooperation among all to accomplish the goal of providing a quality project to our client. We will be designing the project, writing the interview and focus group questions, collecting data via observation, conducting semi-structured interviews and focus groups, coding data, analyzing data, and writing up the project in a report and PowerPoint presentation.

**Weeks of heavy collaboration:** There will be many times in this course when there is very heavy collaboration, cooperation, and discussion. Because we are conducting a live, client-based project, we need to get our research design, interview questions, and focus group questions finished in a timely manner so that we can start collecting data. This will take cooperation on the part of everyone in the class. There is no room for missing assignments, not checking emails and announcements. We need the participation of everyone in the class. If I feel that you are not participating or your research partner tells me that you are not pulling your weight in collaboration, I will reduce your participation grade. I will keep you informed about the heavy collaboration weeks in advance.

**Assignments and dates towards the end of class:** The assignments and dates towards the end of the course may change from what is in the course right now. We are doing a live project for a client and dates at the end of this process are difficult to plan this far in advance. I will give you plenty of time and keep you posted along the way, but know that some of the dates may change.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**Announcements:** Because this class involves a live project, I send out many, many, many emails and announcements to the class during the semester. It is important that you read my emails and announcements and my bulletin board posts. I will keep you informed along the way!

**Email:** Canvas uses your UNT email address. If you prefer to use another account, you must set up the forward function within your UNT email account to the preferred account.

**Withdrawal:** If you are unable to complete this course you must withdraw. Withdrawing from a course is a formal procedure, which **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."

**Plagiarism Policy:** The department of anthropology considers graduate students to be new members of the community of professional anthropologists, who are thus held to the high ethical standards of practicing professionals. They are expected to follow the American Anthropological Association's code of ethics: "*In their capacity as researchers, anthropologists are subject to the ethical principles guiding all scientific and scholarly conduct. They must not plagiarize, nor fabricate or falsify evidence, or knowingly misrepresent information or its source*" (<http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>). Any work not meeting this standard will be evaluated in a hearing before the student; infractions will merit dismissal from the master's program. For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see <http://anthropology.unt.edu/resources-writingpaper.php>. 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/cssr/>.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** It is the policy of the university of North Texas not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability (where reasonable accommodations can be made), disabled veteran status or veteran of the Vietnam era status in its educational programs, activities, admissions or employment policies. In addition to complying with federal and state equal opportunity laws and regulations, the university through its diversity policy declares harassment based on individual differences (including sexual orientation) inconsistent with its mission and education goals. Direct questions and concerns to the equal opportunity office, 940 565 2456, or the dean of students, 940 565 2648. TDD access is

available through relay Texas, 800 735 2989. Anthropology does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability as required by the Americans with disabilities act. The program provides academic adjustments and aid to individuals with disabilities in its programs and activities. If you have a disability, you are strongly advised to contact the office of disability accommodations (uu 318a) or by telephone at 940 565 4323. It is the responsibility of the student to make the necessary arrangements with the instructors.

**Student Behavior Online Discussion:** 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/discussion 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)

**Online Discussion:** Online participation and collaboration is key to your learning and delivering a good project report to our client. Below are some guidelines for doing this well.

- Build on the ideas of others, as well as initiating new ideas.
- Remember that quality is better than quantity. "Me too" and "I agree" type messages add little.
- Quote the relevant part of a message in yours so that others know what you are referring to.
- Ensure a respectful tone in all messages.
- If your message is not relevant to the whole group, send it privately via e-mail.

#### ***Interactive Learning Skills***

- Focus on the subject of the discussion and bring it back to the main purpose if there is topic drift.
- Suggest people take their messages to alternative places such as the Cosmic Cafe for the "off topic" messages.
- Encourage all to participate.
- Respond to another classmates' question.
- Weave several messages together and then push the discussion further with a question or thought provoker.
- Present another perspective on the issue being discussed.
- Provide a practical application for an idea.
- Be willing to participate in a debate.
- Illustrate your point with a story (short).
- Actively seek out other perspectives, e.g. "This is what I think, but I'm sure others have another perspective to share."
- Provide group regulatory functions, e.g. "We seem to be getting off topic here. Could we return to...".
- Accept and understand diversity in learning and personal styles. Respect different points of view.

#### ***Dealing with Conflict Online***

- Did you have a strong reaction to a message? Take a step back. Write your response but don't send it. Wait 24 hours. Have someone else read it first.
- Is there another interpretation? Perhaps clarification is in order. While online interaction can enhance learning, it has some limitations; non-verbal cues are missing.
- Politely agree to disagree and walk away.
- Disagreements over points of view are a necessary part of learning, but personal attacks on the motivations and intelligence of others cannot be tolerated. Remember that there are people behind the words that we see and treat others with the respect we all want and deserve.

## **YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT**

**Bio Statement and Picture:** Your first assignment is to post a biographical statement on the “Welcome and Introductions” discussion board. Most of you have met each other at the online master’s in applied anthropology orientation, but we do have students from other programs enrolled in this class. Building community is an important aspect of this class and posting a bio statement is the first step to getting to know each other. 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! **It is due Wednesday, August 28.**

## **NOTES**

The instructor reserves the right to add, delete, or revise segments of this course or syllabus.

And finally I want to give credit to Dr. Lisa Henry for designing, organizing and writing this course. She is fully responsible for the content, which I think is extraordinary and will provide you with a wealth of information to prepare you in qualitative methods.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

### Unit I: Preparation

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topics and Assignments</u>	<u>Core readings</u>
Aug. 26 – Sept. 2	<p><b>Introduction to course</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Become familiar with Canvas</li> <li>2. Read entire syllabus</li> <li>3. Discussion #1: Post a bio message on the “Welcome and Introductions” discussion board, <b>due Wednesday, 8/28</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Lesson 1: Social Science, Anthropology and Ethnography</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion #2: Ethnography, <b>1<sup>st</sup> post due Sunday, 9/1, responses by Monday, 9/2</b></li> <li>2. Abstract #1: Social Research articles, <b>abstract due Sunday, 9/1, responses by Monday, 9/2</b></li> </ol>	TK V1, Ch. 1-2 TK V3, Ch. 2
Sept. 3-9	<p><b>Lesson 2: Theory and Epistemology</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion #3: Theory, <b>1<sup>st</sup> post due Sunday, 9/8, responses by Monday, 9/9</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Lesson 3: Ethics and Research</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assignment #1: CITI Human Subjects Training certificate, <b>due Sunday, 9/8</b></li> </ol>	TK V1 Ch. 3  TK V1 Ch. 10, discipline’s ethics statements
Sept. 10-23	<p><b>Lesson 4: Research Design, Part 1</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abstract #2: Proposals, <b>abstract due Sunday, 9/15, responses by Monday, 9/16</b></li> <li>2. Discussion #4: student loans, <b>1<sup>st</sup> post due Sunday, 9/15, responses by Monday, 9/16</b></li> <li>3. Discussion #5: Research questions, <b>1<sup>st</sup> post due Sunday, 9/15, responses by Monday, 9/16</b></li> </ol>	TK V1 Ch. 4-6 TK V3 Ch. 1, 10

	<p><b>Research Design, Part II</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research Proposal section draft, <b>due Sunday, 9/22</b></li> <li>2. Participate in Zoom call on research proposal, <b>7:30 pm CST on Monday, 9/23</b></li> <li>3. Research proposal section revision, <b>due Monday, 9/23</b></li> <li>4. Proposal presentation, <b>Wednesday, 9/25 at 2pm CST</b></li> </ol>	
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## Unit II: Data Collection

<p>Sept. 24 – 30</p>	<p><b>Lesson 5: Observation and Fieldnotes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abstracts #3: Observation articles, <b>abstract due Sunday, 9/29, responses by Monday, 9/30</b></li> <li>2. Assignment #2: Observation Field Notes, <b>due Sunday, 9/29</b></li> </ol>	<p>TK V3 Ch. 3-4 Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes (on Canvas)</p>
<p>Oct. 1-14</p>	<p><b>Lesson 6: Informants and Interviewing, Part I</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abstracts #4: Interview articles, <b>abstract due Sunday, 10/6, responses by Monday, 10/7</b></li> <li>2. Discussion #6: Interview Questions, <b>1<sup>st</sup> post due Sunday, 10/6, responses by Monday, 10/7</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Informants and Interviewing, Part II</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct 2 interviews</li> <li>2. Participate in Zoom call on interviews, <b>Monday, 10/7</b></li> <li>3. Assignment #3: first interview transcription, <b>due Sunday, 10/13</b></li> <li>4. Assignment #4: second interview fieldnotes, <b>due Sunday, 10/13</b></li> </ol>	<p>TK V3 Ch. 6-7 TK V3 Ch 5 (optional)</p>

Oct. 15-28	<p><b>Lesson 7: Focus Groups, Part I</b></p> <p>1. Discussion #7: Focus group questions, <b>1<sup>st</sup> post due Sunday, 10/20, responses by Monday, 10/21</b></p> <p><b>Focus Groups, Part II</b></p> <p>1. Conduct focus group 2. Assignment #5: Focus group transcription &amp; fieldnotes, <b>due Sunday, 10/27</b></p>	Focus Group Manual – Canvas TK V3 Ch. 8
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### Unit III: Analysis

Oct 29 – Nov 18	<p><b>Lesson 8: Coding and Analysis, Part I</b></p> <p>1. Discussion #8: Coding, <b>1<sup>st</sup> post due Sunday, 11/3, responses by Monday, 11/4</b> 2. Assignment #6: Code observation fieldnotes, <b>due Sunday, 11/3</b> 3. Participate in Zoom call on coding, <b>Monday at 7:30 pm CST, 11/4</b></p> <p><b>Coding and Analysis, Part II</b></p> <p>1. Assignment #7: Code 1<sup>st</sup> interview transcript, <b>due Sunday, 11/10</b> 2. Assignment #8: Code 2<sup>nd</sup> interview notes, <b>due Sunday, 11/10</b> 3. Assignment #9: Code focus group notes, <b>due Sunday, 11/10</b></p> <p><b>Coding and Analysis, Part III</b></p> <p>1. Participate in Zoom call on analysis, <b>Monday at 7:30 pm CST, 11/11</b> 2. Discussion #9: identifying themes, <b>1<sup>st</sup> post due Sunday, 11/17, responses by Monday, 11/18</b></p>	<p>TK V1, Ch. 7 TK V5, Ch. 1-6 Ryan and Bernard 2003</p> <p>TK V5, Ch 7-8</p> <p>TK V5, Ch 10</p>
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### Unit IV: Writing & Presenting



<p>Nov 19 – Dec 8</p>	<p><b>Lesson 9: Ethnographic Writing</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Final Report section draft, <b>due Sunday, November 24</b></li> <li>2. Final Report peer review editing, <b>due Sunday, December 1</b></li> <li>3. Final Report section revision, <b>due Sunday, December 8</b></li> </ol>	<p>TK V3, Ch.11 TK V5, Ch 11-12</p>
<p>Dec 9 - 11</p>	<p><b>Lesson 10: Presentation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presentation dress rehearsal, <b>Monday, December 9 at 7:30 pm CST</b></li> <li>2. Final Presentation to client, <b>noon CST on Wednesday, December 11</b></li> </ol>	

