RESEARCH DESIGN and METHODS IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

This seminar prepares doctoral students to design ethnographic research projects, write grant proposals, collect and analyze data, and write up research findings. Topics addressed include the relationship between theory and method, defining researchable questions, research ethics, IRB protocols, participant observation, sensory ethnography, writing fieldnotes, interview techniques (unstructured, semi-structured, structured), transcription, sampling, designing questionnaires, coding data, data analysis, research proposal evaluation criteria, peer review processes, interpersonal relations with fieldwork interlocutors, and other methodological topics of interest to seminar participants (e.g., oral histories, life histories, censuses, focus group interviews, archival research).

Practical exercises will introduce students to techniques of collecting, coding, analyzing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data (with an emphasis on qualitative techniques). Students will review research proposals funded by a variety of agencies. We will discuss key components of successful proposals, along with screening criteria proposal reviewers use and how they vary across funding agencies. We will examine actual cases of ethical dilemmas considered by the AAA and how they were resolved, as well as Institutional Review Board (IRB) criteria for research on human subjects. Published examples of ethnographic writing will be interspersed throughout the course; we will explore their methodological, narratological, ethical, and epistemological dimensions.

Requirements include active participation in seminar discussions (which requires completing all assigned readings on time), occasional oral presentations, written exercises, practice in various research techniques, and a research proposal. Any student who misses a seminar meeting should inform the instructor in advance of the reason for the absence, and by noon on the Friday following the missed class must complete not only any regular assignment but also a make-up assignment that will include (but not necessarily be limited to) a five-page summary of the readings covered that week.

Grades will be determined as follows: class attendance and participation = 25%; short writing assignments and methods exercises = 25%; research proposal draft = 10%; research proposal = 40%. Late work will be penalized.

Key deadlines: Complete the Rutgers Human Subjects Certification no later than Friday, February 15th. The first draft of the research proposal (soft copy) is due by 3:00 p.m., Friday, April 26th, and the final proposal (hard copy) is due by 3:00 p.m., Thursday, May 9th. [In addition, most weeks include practical exercises or short writing assignments.]

Required Readings include articles and book chapters available on the Sakai course website, and the following four paperback textbooks (available on reserve at Douglass Library or for purchase at Barnes and Noble."


How to access articles in journals such as *American Ethnologist, American Anthropologist, Cultural Anthropology*, or *Current Anthropology*: Go to the Rutgers home page (http://www.rutgers.edu), then to “academics,” then to the libraries page; under “24/7 services,” click on “search indexes and databases to find articles,” and then click on “indexes and data bases.” Log in (box in upper left corner) and scroll down to the “By Title” section and click on “W” and then go to “Wiley Online Library.” Click on “Connect” and then search for the journal and article you want.

Other Resources


The UC-Berkeley proposal workshop site offers a detailed guide to stages of proposal writing, recommended timeline for proposal development, funding sources, ethics, defining research questions, proposal writing style tips, and components of a successful proposal (theory, research question, research design, budgets, concepts and terminology). It includes samples of proposals funded by NSF and Fulbright, along with George Orwell’s 1945 essay on “Politics and the English Language,” Michael Watts’ essay “The Holy Grail: In Pursuit of the Dissertation Proposal,” and recommended readings on research methods.

--Social Science Research Council, readings on research methods (archival research, case studies, ethnographic methods, focus group interviews, oral histories, quantitative methods, survey research, research ethics). <http:www.ssrc.org>


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SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1/ 28 Jan.
INTRODUCTION: SCHOLARLY IMAGINATION

--Howard S. Becker, “Terrorized by the Literature,” pp. 135-149 in Writing for Social Scientists.

- Research conceptualization exercise.

Week 2/ 4 Feb.
(1) DEFINING A RESEARCH PROBLEM
(2) A SHORT HISTORY OF FIELDWORK
(3) WRITING TIPS

--H. Russell Bernard, Research Methods in Anthropology, chapters 3 & 4 (pp. 54-112).
--UC-Berkeley Proposal Writing Workshop, “Nuts and Bolts.” Read sections on theory, research question, research design, concepts and terminology, and timeline: http://iis.berkeley.edu/content/nuts-bolts
--Howard Becker, Writing for Social Scientists, pp. 1-42 (Chapters 1-2).

- Problem definition exercise.
Week 3/ 11 Feb.

Students are required to complete the Rutgers Human Subjects Certification no later than Friday, February 15th and to email the certificate to the instructor.

(1) RESEARCH ETHICS
(2) EDITING BY EAR

--Howard Becker, Writing for Social Scientists, pp. 43-89 (chapters 3-4).

--Code of Ethics, American Anthropological Association (pp. 359-364 in Ethnographic Fieldwork).
--Guidelines of the African Studies Association for Ethical Conduct in Research and Projects in Africa (2000). Available at www.africanstudies.org (click on “About the ASA” and then go to “Ethical Guidelines”).

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Perspectives on Ethnographic and Oral History Research:

**Information about the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Rutgers:
http://orsp.rutgers.edu/index.php?q=content/institutional-review-board-irb
Human subjects certification process at Rutgers:
http://orsp.rutgers.edu/index.php?q=content/human-subjects-certification-program
**Online certification test instructions and link to exam (required of all researchers who work with humans):
http://orsp.rutgers.edu/index.php?q=content/hscp-instructions-and-link-online-exam
“How to Smoothly and Successfully Complete the Process for IRB Submission,” Kathryn Greene:

Reference/Optional (IRBs and Academic Freedom, IRBs and the AAA):
--2004 AAA Statement on Ethnography and Institutional Review Boards
http://www.aaanet.org/stmnts/irb.htm
--Zachary M. Schrag, 2010, Ethical Imperialism: Institutional Review Boards and the Social Sciences, 1965-
Case studies of ethical dilemmas.

Week 4/ 18 Feb.
FIELDWORK RELATIONS, HAZARDS, RAPPORT, TRANSFERENCE, SENSORY EXPERIENCE


Recommended:

PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION AND FIELDNOTES


Observation and fieldnotes writing exercise.
CHOICE OF INTERVIEWEES, UNSTRUCTURED AND SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS, LIFE HISTORIES, KINSHIP, MAPPING

--H. Russell Bernard, Research Methods in Anthropology, chapter 2 (pp. 23-53), chapters 7 & 8 (pp. 143-186). [Skim chapter 5, pp. 113-129.]

- Unstructured and semi-structured interview exercises.

Week 7/ 11 March
(1) KNOWING AND UNKNOWING IN FIELDWORK
(2) LANGUAGE IN THE FIELD, TEXT ANALYSIS, and Atlas.Ti DEMONSTRATION


[Guest lecturer: Professor Laura Ahearn, 3:00-3:45]

- Interview transcription exercise.

SPRING BREAK, March 16-24

Week 8/25 March
(1) STRUCTURED INTERVIEWING AND QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN
(2) POLISHING YOUR WRITING

--H. Russell Bernard, Research Methods in Anthropology, chapters 9 (pp. 187-222); re-read chapter 2 (pp. 28-68).
--Howard Becker, Writing for Social Scientists, pp. 90-134, 150-184 (chapters 5-7, 9-10).

- Questionnaire design and structured interview exercise.

Week 9/ 1 April
GRANT PROPOSALS: KEY COMPONENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA, I

--Institute of International Studies, University of California (Berkeley), “Dissertation Proposal Workshop” (re-read “Nuts and Bolts” sections): http://iis.berkeley.edu/content/nuts-bolts
--Sample proposals funded by Fulbright-Hays, Fulbright IIE, Guggenheim Foundation, National Science Foundation, Social Science Research Council, Wenner-Gren Foundation. [S]

- Proposal evaluation exercises.

**Week 10/8 April**

**CODING AND ANALYZING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA**


- Data coding exercise.

**Guest speaker:** Dr. Maple Razsa (Colby College), "Documenting 'The Right to the Postsocialist City:' Video Methods and Activist Research." 4:00 p.m., Biosciences Building, room 302.

**Week 11/15 April**

**FIELDWORK IN THE ARCHIVES, ORAL HISTORY, CENSUSES, MULTI-SITED FIELDWORK**


**Week 12/ 22 April**

**GRANT PROPOSALS:  KEY COMPONENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA, II**

--Sample proposals funded by Fulbright-Hays, Fulbright IIE, Guggenheim Foundation, National Science Foundation, Social Science Research Council, Wenner-Gren Foundation. [S]

- Proposal evaluation exercises.

**Draft #1 of research proposal due 3:00 p.m. Friday, April 26.**

Week 13/29 April

WRITE-UP

--Sharon Hutchinson, 1996, "Prologue" (pp. 1-20) and "On Becoming Human in Nuer Eyes: Methods of Information Gathering" (pp. 44-55), in *Nuer Dilemmas*, University of Chicago Press. [S]


**View the expanded word cloud gallery on *AE’s* website: http://www.americanethnologist.org

--George Orwell, 1945, “Politics and the English Language.” [S] Also available at http://iis.berkeley.edu/content/style.


- Writing and editing exercise.

Week 14/6 May

FROM RESEARCH PROPOSAL TO DISSERTATION TO BOOK


**RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE THURSDAY, MAY 9***

(3:00 p.m. in instructor’s office mailbox—no electronic submissions) *No exceptions*