Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology – Anthropology 139

Fall 2006
M & W 9:30 – 10:45 a.m
Fowler A139

Sections – Haines 310
1A – M 1:00-1:50 p.m.
1B – TU 8:00-8:50 a.m.
1C – TU 9:00-9:50 a.m.

Prof. Linda Garro
Office: Haines Hall 316A
Office Hours: Monday 2:00 – 3:00, Thursday 12:00 - 1:00, and by appointment
e-mail: lgarro@anthro.ucla.edu
phone: 310-206-6249

Teaching Assistant (TA): Nicole Falgoust
Office: Haines Hall 360
Office Hours: Monday 11:00 – 12:00, Tuesday 10:30-11:30 and by appointment
e-mail: nfalgous@ucla.edu

Course Website: www.sscnet.ucla.edu/06F/anthro139-1/
Department of Anthropology Main Office: Haines 341; phone: 310-825-2055
Department of Anthropology Reading Room: Haines 352

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to equip students with a better understanding of research methods in cultural anthropology and how anthropologists think about and carry out their research projects. As an introductory survey course, it is intended to provide you with knowledge and skills that will help you to assess the research of others as well as give you some sense of what is involved in designing and carrying out research. You will learn about some of the tools that anthropological researchers use as well as gain insight into how theory and method are linked in sociocultural anthropology. This is not a course designed to actually prepare you for imminent fieldwork, but to give you a sense of what doing so is like. The focus of this class is primarily on the collection and management of data (not the analysis and write-up). Because ethnographic fieldwork is the hallmark of cultural anthropology and often considered a necessary prerequisite for becoming a bona fide cultural anthropologist, we will devote time to exploring what is involved in “doing fieldwork” and what can be learned through ethnographic field research. However, we will also explore cross-cultural comparisons using ethnographic records available through the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF).

Required Texts:


Additional readings are posted on the course website. A list of the optional readings appears at the end of the syllabus.

**Course Requirements:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercises/Class Participation</td>
<td>20% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>15% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>20% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1 (midterm)</td>
<td>20% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2 (final)</td>
<td>25% of grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final will draw more heavily on the material covered after the midterm but will also draw on concepts introduced before the midterm.

There will be some short exercises that will be discussed during class time (in lecture and/or in discussion section). Most involve some additional preparation/activity outside of the classroom. While the completed exercises do not receive individualized grades, they do contribute points toward your grade. You will not receive full credit for completed exercises that are marginally acceptable or unacceptable. If you miss an exercise that involves material presented in class, it cannot be made up. Class attendance, including attendance at sections, will also enter into the class participation component of the grade. **No late exercises will be accepted.**

All written assignments are to be typed (double-spaced with at least 1" margins and numbered pages). Please note that **all writing must be grammatically correct, spell checked, and easily understandable.** Anything that is not will be deemed unacceptable. Please keep copies of all written assignments. The copy you hand in should not be the only copy. **It is not my policy to accept late assignments. If (and the emphasis is on if) a late assignment is accepted, it will not receive full credit.**

**You will be asked to use “Turnitin.com” for Assignment #1 and Assignment #2.**

If you will miss class for whatever reason on the date that something is due, it must be turned in before class at the main office of the Department of Anthropology. For anything turned in outside of regular class hours, please ensure that someone in the office records the date and time delivered on your assignment.

Assignments and exercises sent by e-mail will not be graded and will receive no credit.

If you miss a lecture or a section meeting, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate. If you miss a handout that is distributed during a class session, it is your responsibility to obtain a copy from a classmate.

Any written course work (assignments, examinations) that students do not pick up will be held until the end of Winter Quarter, 2006. After that time, they will no longer be available.
It is expected that students will complete the assigned readings before coming to class.

I will attempt to respond to your e-mails as promptly as possible. However, you should expect that it may sometimes take me several days to respond if I have other pressing commitments. If you have questions about the course mechanics, grading, the exercises or the assignments, please get in touch with the TA. If your question is one that would be useful for class discussion, a response will be provided through class discussion rather than as a personal written response to your e-mail. Spam filtering devices sometimes make errors; if, after several days, you are concerned that an email has not reached me, please resend it. Please do not send either myself or the TA an e-mail requesting information about what was covered in a class session you missed. Information about grades cannot be obtained by e-mail.

Exams

You are responsible for all the reading material, whether or not it is discussed in class. You are also responsible for the materials covered in lecture and discussion sections. The exams primarily will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Assignment 1 – Structured Observation

As preparation, read “Carrying Out a Structured Observation” by Laurie Price. Further instructions will be provided in class and in section. Your write-up of this assignment should result in an approximately 5 page report on your observations (no more than 6 pages). Please do not choose “Northern Lights” on UCLA north campus as your observation site (an off-campus location is recommended). Please attach your raw field notes to your report. You may also want to attach a drawing of the physical layout and/or tables or other analyses of your field observations. These attachments do not count as part of the 6 page limit. As part of your report, you may comment on your experiences, including any difficulties that occurred in observing.

Assignment 2 – Ethnographic Interviewing

In anticipation of this assignment, you may want to read “Step One: Locating an Informant” by Spradley early in the course. Class discussion of this assignment will take place after the midterm. Following the guidelines in the Spradley chapters your task is to find an informant, and then prepare for and carry out two ethnographic interviews with the informant. To carry out this assignment, you will need to find someone who is willing to be interviewed on two separate occasions. This person can be another student but it is not a good idea to interview someone who is a friend, especially a close friend (we will discuss this further in class). If you have access to a recording device, you may want to use it for this assignment. Your write up should cover the main points raised in the Spradley chapters (and, when relevant, the advice given by Bernard). Your write-up should discuss your preparations for interviewing (on both occasions) and detail the circumstances of the interviews. Drawing on material covered in the class, you should include a critique of the interview process and a statement of what you would do differently the next time. Attach your notes (or transcript) from the interview to the write-up. The write-up should be 10 pages maximum. Remember, the focus in this class is on learning data collection skills, not on the analysis of research findings.
Course Schedule

WEEK 1
October 2  Introduction to Class

Read before next class:
> Bernard, Skim "Preface" (through p. xi)
> Bernard, Ch. 1 "Anthropology and the Social Sciences"

Exercise to be handed in at beginning of class on Oct. 4 (along with your name, please identify your section number on all exercises):
Observe a person eating and write a report (maximum length is 2 typed double-spaced pages). There are no additional written instructions for this exercise.

October 4  Anthropology and Methods in Historical Perspective
What is Ethnography?

Read before next class:
> Bernard, Ch. 2 “The Foundations of Social Research" (Note: We will be covering some of the basic concepts raised in this chapter in class for the next couple of weeks)

Instructions for Operational Definitions Exercise will be handed out in class. The exercise is due at the start of class on Wednesday, October 11.

WEEK 2
October 9  Why Methods?

Read before next class:

> Bernard, Ch. 3 “Preparing for Research” (Note: As you are not designing an independent research project in this class, our focus is on the sections entitled “Ethics” and “Theory” [pp. 74-88].)


> Optional readings - Crane and Angrosino - “Project One: Proxemics," and “Project Two: Making Maps.” (Note: These readings may also be useful in helping you think about Assignment #1.)
October 11  Epistemology

**Exercise due in class:** Operational Definitions

Read before next class:

WEEK 3
October 16  Epistemology (continued); Basic Concepts – Assessing Research Claims

Read before next class:

October 18  Assessing Research Claims (cont.)

Read before next class:
> Finish reading Edgerton
> Bernard, section entitled “HRAF: Cross-Cultural Content Analysis” (pp. 483-487) in Ch. 17 “Qualitative Data Analysis I: Text Analysis"

WEEK 4
October 23  Reliability and Validity

Read before next class:
> Bernard, Ch. 15 “Direct and Indirect Observation" (Note: We will not have time in class to cover much of what is in this chapter. Bring questions about material not covered in lecture to your discussion section during week 5.)

October 25  TBA

Read for Next Class:
> Bernard, from section entitled “True Experiments in the Field" (p.131) up to the start of the section on “Factorial Designs" (the middle of p. 143) in Chapter 5 “Research Design: Experiments and Experimental Thinking."
WEEK 5
October 30  Observation; Natural Experiments; Unobtrusive and Covert Research - Ethical Dimensions

Assignment #1 due at the beginning of class

November 1  Midterm Review

WEEK 6
November 6  Midterm Examination – PLEASE BRING A BLUE BOOK

Read before next class:
> Bernard, Ch. 9 “Interviewing: Unstructured and Semistructured.”

November 8  Overview of Research Strategies; Introductory comments on Interviewing

Read before next class:
> Bohannon, Laura 1966 Shakespeare in the Bush. Natural History 75(August-September): 28-33

WEEK 7
November 13  Interviewing continued

Read before next class:
> Bernard, Chapter 10 “Structured Interviewing I: Questionnaires.”
  Note: You are not responsible for all of the material in this chapter. You should read and understand the key points (but not all the details) from the beginning of the chapter (p. 251) up to “Using Interviewers” on p. 265. Just quickly skim the next section (you will not need to review this section for the final examination). The section starting with “Closed vs. Open-Ended Questions” (p. 268) up to the section entitled “The Response Rate Problem” (middle of p. 278) should be read more carefully. You should also read the section entitled “Pretesting and Learning from Mistakes” (pp. 286-287). With that exception, none of the material from the section entitled “The Response Rate Problem” to the end of the chapter needs to be reviewed for the final examination.
> Bernard, Ch. 11 “Structured Interviewing: Cultural Domain Analysis”
  (Note: In this chapter, focus on the sections with headings printed in bold face and skim the sections with headings printed in italics. On page 316, Bernard states “Rank ordering produces interval-level data. . .” This is incorrect and you should be able to
tell me the correct level of measurement.)

Optional Reading: Chen and Murray

November 15  Questionnaires & Structured Interviews

Read before next class:

>Bernard, section entitled “What are Samples and Why Do We Need Them” on pages 146-147 of Ch. 6 “Sampling.”
> Bernard, section entitled “Choosing Informants” from page 196 to the start of section entitled “The Cultural Consensus Model” around middle of page 202. Read also the section on “Paying Informants” (bottom of p.209) at the end of the chapter.
> Start reading Raybeck, Douglas “Mad Dogs, Englishmen and the Errant Anthropologist”


WEEK 8

November 20  Informants, Participant Observation

Read before next class:

>Bernard, Ch. 13 “Participant Observation”
> Continue reading Raybeck, Douglas “Mad Dogs, Englishmen and the Errant Anthropologist”
> To accompany Raybeck's comments on the “semantic differential technique,” read the brief section on this technique in Bernard, pp. 336-338, see also the example on p. 274 in Chapter 11, “Structured Interviewing I: Questionnaires.”

November 22  Participant Observation

Read before next class:
> Finish reading Raybeck
> Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association (approved June 1998; available online at the Association’s website)

Optional Readings: Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard (excerpt from “The Nuer”)
WEEK 9  
November 27  
Participant Observation (continued)  
Read before next class:  
> Bernard, Ch. 14 “Field Notes: How to Take Them, Code Them, Manage Them” (up to p. 408)  
Optional Readings: Chagnon, Evans-Pritchard (excerpt from “Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande), Scheper-Hughes (“Parts Unknown”)  

November 29  
Participant Observation, Fieldnotes  
Read before next class:  
> Bernard, section entitled “What are Samples and Why Do We Need Them” on pages 146-147 of Ch. 6 “Sampling.”  
> Bernard, pp. 186 -196 (until start of section entitled “Choosing Informants”) & 202-209  
Optional Reading: Young & Garro  

WEEK 10  
December 4  
Sampling in Ethnographic Research; Cultural Consensus Model  
Assignment #2 is due in class  

December 6  
Wrap-up and Review  

**Final Exam:** Tuesday, December 12, 2006, 11:30am-2:30pm in Fowler A139  
PLEASE BRING A BLUE BOOK  

**Optional Recommended Readings**  
Chagnon, Napoleon  1997 Ch. 1 - Doing Fieldwork Among the Yanomamö. *In Yanomamö, 5th edition*, pp. 5-31 [the entire chapter is available, goes up to p. 43]. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace

- Project One: Proxemics pp. 23-29
- Project Two: Making Maps pp. 30-43
- Project Three: Charting Kinship pp. 44-52


Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1976 Ch. 5 Witchdoctors (sections 1 & 2, pp. 65-70) & Ch. 6 Training of a Novice in the Art of a Witch-Doctor (pp. 90-110). In *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (abridged by Eva Gillies; unabridged volume originally published in 1937) Oxford: Oxford University Press


