Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology – Anthropology 139

MW 9:00 -10:15 a.m.       Sections – Haines 310
PUB AFF 2214                1A – T 12:00 – 12:50 p.m.
Fall 2007                   1B – T 1:00 – 1:50 p.m.
                             1C – M 11:00 – 11:50 a.m.

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Office Hours: Monday 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. & Wednesday 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Course Website: http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/07F/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/recommended
readings appears at the end of the syllabus.

Course Requirements:

Exercises/ Class Participation (see below): 20% of grade
Assignment 1 15% of grade
Assignment 2 20% of grade
Exam 1 (midterm): 20% of grade
Exam 2 (final): 25% of grade

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. No late exercises will be accepted. Class attendance, including attendance at sections, will also enter into the class participation component of the grade.

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, making your submission to Turnitin.com no later than the day after the assignment is due in class.

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. The TA will place any extra handouts in the Anthropology Reading Room (Haines 352) – look for a container labeled “Anthropology 139” on the bookshelf next to the copy machine (we make enough copies for everyone enrolled in the class). If you miss a handout that is distributed during a class session, it is your responsibility to obtain a copy, either from the reading room or from a classmate.
Any written course work (assignments, examinations) that students do not pick up will be held until the end of Winter Quarter, 2008. 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 in a reasonably prompt manner. 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. Please put “ANTH 139” in the subject header. 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.

Students are expected to comply with UCLA’s Policy on Academic Integrity at all times. Further information is available on the course website through the link “Academic Integrity – Writing Resources.”

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 1
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. 3 (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 3
Anthropology and Methods in Historical Perspective

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 10.

WEEK 2
October 8
Why Methods?
What is Ethnography?

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].)

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*Ethnographic Data Collection.* Pp. 107-114. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. (Note: The reading by Price is relevant to Assignment #1)

> **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 10**

Epistemology

**Exercise due in class:** Operational Definitions (please include your section number)

Read before next class:

**WEEK 3**

**October 15**

Epistemology (continued); Basic Concepts


**October 17**

Basic Concepts Continued

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 22**

Levels of Measurement

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 24**

Assessing Research Claims

Read for Next Class:
> Heider, Karl G. 1988 The Rashomon Effect: When Ethnographers

**WEEK 5**

**October 29**

Assessing Research Claims (cont.); Observation

**Assignment #1 due at the beginning of class (please include your section number) – Remember to submit the main body of the assignment using Turnitin by October 30**

**October 31**

Midterm Review

**WEEK 6**

**November 5**

Midterm Examination – **PLEASE BRING A BLUE BOOK**

Read before next class:

> Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association (approved June 1998; available online at the Association's website)
> 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.”

**November 7**

Observation; Natural Experiments; Unobtrusive and Covert Research - Ethical Dimensions, Informed Consent and Institutional Review Boards

Read before next class:

> Bernard, Ch. 9 “Interviewing: Unstructured and Semistructured.”

**WEEK 7**

**November 12**

VETERAN’S DAY – No class

Read before next class:


**November 14**

Reliability, Triangulation, Validity

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.
> 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.

Optional Readings: Briggs, 1984; Chen and Murray 1976

WEEK 8
November 19
Overview of Research Strategies; Introductory comments on Interviewing

Read before next class:
> 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.)
> Start reading Raybeck, Douglas “Mad Dogs, Englishmen and the Errant Anthropologist”

November 21
Typology of Language-Based (Interview) Methods

> 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.”

Recommended Reading: Garro, L.C. 1986; Young and Garro 1982.

WEEK 9
November 26
Informants, Participant Observation

Read before next class:
> Bernard, Ch. 13 “Participant Observation”
> Finish reading Raybeck

Optional Readings: Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard (excerpt from “The Nuer”)

November 28
TBA

Read before next class:
> Bernard, Ch. 14 “Field Notes: How to Take Them, Code Them, Manage Them” (up to p. 408)

Recommended reading: Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (Ire in Ireland)

Optional Readings: Chagnon, Evans-Pritchard (excerpt from “Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande), Scheper-Hughes (“Parts Unknown”)

WEEK 10
December 3  Participant Observation, Fieldnotes, Sampling in Ethnographic Research

December 5  Wrap-up and Review
Assignment #2 is due in class (please include your section number) – Remember to submit the main body of the assignment using Turnitin by December 6

Final Exam:  Tuesday, December 11, 2007, 3:00pm – 6:00pm
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.


