

ANTH 355-01 FIELD METHODS IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

“traditional anthropological catechism: study what you can see and hear; record everything you can, do not expect it to be entirely consistent; listen; count the ancillary blessings of discomfort. If those items in the catechism do not add up to a methodology for other, sterner disciplines, so be it. They have, I believe, nonetheless helped to reveal worlds otherwise hidden or unimagined”
– Sidney Mintz in “Afterword: Peasantries and the Rural Sector – Notes on a Discovery”

**Fall 2008
Fitzelle 318
TTh 12-1:15pm**

Instructor: Sallie Han e-mail: hanss@oneonta.edu phone: 436-2715
Office hours: M 1-3:30pm, T 1:15-2pm, W 10-10:45am & by appointment

Credit: 3 s.h.
Prerequisites: ANTH 100 and permission of instructor (LA, WS2)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduces practical skills and field methods used by anthropologists. Included are problems of participant-observation; how to conduct an interview, design of questionnaires and structured interviews; techniques of data analysis; still photography and audio/visual recording; and proposal and report writing. Skills valuable not just to those planning fieldwork, but also in many of the social science preliminary artifact processing techniques. Course readings, lectures, discussions. Students learn through participation in on-going faculty research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The goal of this class will be to gain both practical experience with and critical perspective on field methods in cultural anthropology. In this class, we will:

- **Examine the relationship between research ethics and research design.** Because the work of cultural anthropologists is based on rapport – that is, a relationship of trust and reciprocity – we need to consider ethics and design hand-in-hand.
- **Engage in a series of research activities, including the collection and analysis of ethnographic data.** In so doing, students will develop and practice ethnographic research methods, and become familiar with their particular rewards and challenges. Particular attention will be given to participant-observation and ethnographic interviews.
- **Explore issues surrounding the presentation of ethnographic data.** The reporting and representing of information about people raises concerns about not only accuracy, but also fairness and justice.
- **Contribute to on-going ethnographic research in the United States.** Students will be engaged as team researchers in a project, “The Meaning of Main Street,” that the instructor is initiating in and around the city of Oneonta. Each student will develop his or her own individual research project (e.g., running a business, traffic, living on Main Street, pizza) that contributes to the larger theme.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course is modeled on a studio class or workshop. In addition to reading assignments and class discussions, which will cover both methodological and topical concerns, students will be required to participate in a series of research activities, as outlined below. During the course of the semester, students will assemble a portfolio that will include the following:

Online field journal (25 points)

- Post an entry on Angel before each class meeting (Tuesday and Thursday)
- Should include notes on reading assignments as well as entries on each of the research activities, plus at least one thought relevant to your project

Project description (10 points)

- Describes the focus of your individual research project and how it contributes to a larger project on "The Meaning of Main Street"

Preliminary bibliography (10 points)

- Should identify at least five (5) scholarly sources
- At least one source should include a classic or contemporary ethnography that is relevant to your project

Participant/observation (20 points)

- Observation for your project
- Preliminary notes during fieldwork
- Entry for online field journal

Interview plan (10 points)

- Briefly describe why you have chosen to interview this particular person and the kinds of questions that you intend to ask

Interview (25 points)

- Record an interview for your project
- Take preliminary notes during fieldwork
- Write an entry for online field journal
- Transcribe

Data analysis report (15 points)

- Analyze entries for online field journal
- Annotate your interview transcript
- Analyze one other source, such as archive or media

Annotated bibliography (15 points)

- Should include at least eight (8) scholarly sources
- In your notes on the classic or contemporary ethnography, give particular consideration of the collection, analysis, and presentation of the data

Poster presentation (Final) (30 points)

- Details to be discussed

Your final grade will be based on meeting all of the following requirements. Failure to meet any one of the requirements can result in a failing grade.

COURSE PROCEDURES & POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance in class is required. Indeed, failure to attend class regularly can result in a failing grade for the class. If there are special circumstances to explain a pattern of absence, then it is the student's responsibility to report these to the instructor promptly, and to present official documentation. Also, please be reminded that absence does not exempt students from responsibility for all of the material covered in class, and that there are no extra credit or make-up assignments.

ANGEL

All students will be required to enroll in the Angel site for this class. Announcements, instructions for written assignments, presentation notes, and supplemental readings will be available on Angel. You also will submit written assignments on Angel.

E-MAIL

When you are e-mailing Dr. Han, please use only the following information in the subject line:

Your Last Name Anth 355

PARTICIPATION AND CONDUCT

This is a reading and discussion-intensive class. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss readings. Although it is necessary for you to bring all of your books to class, **you are required to bring your reading assignment (textbook, reader, ethnography, or hard copy of PDF).**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful, considerate, and courteous of their classmates and their professor.

ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

Creating an environment for learning conducive to learning involves community effort. **If you wish to use a laptop during class, you must receive the instructor's permission.** Students are expected to refrain from using cellular phones, iPods, etc., during classes. Otherwise, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

In order to meet the requirements of this class, it is expected that all of your written work, including take-home writing assignments and in-class essay exams, will represent your own honest, individual, and original efforts to engage with the material in this class. Please be careful with your written work. Dishonesty of any kind (e.g., "copying" or "borrowing") will not be tolerated, and will result in a failing grade for the class.

You will be expected to cite your sources properly and include a list of references. You may prepare your citations in any standard style used in scholarly writing (e.g., MLA, APA), but please be sure to use it consistently and correctly. For example, the style guideline for American Anthropologist is available at www.aaanet.org.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Please note that special considerations such as extensions on deadlines will be permitted only with official documentation. If special circumstances arise that prevent the regular and timely completion of assignments, it is the student's responsibility to communicate them with the instructor. Please do so as soon as possible.

All material on this syllabus is subject to change.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Michael Angrosino, *Doing Cultural Anthropology* (DCA)
 Dimitra Doukas, *Worked Over: The Corporate Sabotage of an American Community*
 Additional readings will be distributed as handouts or posted on Angel.

DATE	READING/TOPIC TO BE DISCUSSED	ACTIVITY/ASSIGNMENT
Th 8-28	Introduction – What makes ethnography distinctive? Video: “Doing Anthropology”	
T 9-2	Field methods in cultural anthropology – Overview Introduction (DCA) Chagnon, “Doing Fieldwork among the Yanomamo” (Angel) Film: “A Man Called Bee”	
Th 9-4	Ethics of human subjects research – History and overview AAA Code of Ethics (Angel)	Begin certification to conduct human subjects research - On Angel, follow the link to www.citi.org
T 9-9	Ethics of human subjects research - Informed consent Doukas, Chapters 1 and 2	Complete certification to conduct human subjects research
Th 9-11	Studying a community / Studying in a community Doukas, Chapters 3 and 4	Meet at location TBD on Main Street
T 9-16	Rodriguez and Baber, “Reconstructing a Community through Archival Research” (DCA, Chapter 5) Nanda, “Using a Museum as a Resource for Ethnographic Research” (DCA, Chapter 6)	Meet at the Greater Oneonta Historical Society’s History Center, 183 Main Street
Th 9-18	Library research workshop	Meet at Milne Library Project description due at the start of class
T 9-23	Doukas, Chapters 5, 6, and 7	
Th 9-25	Participant-observation Tierney, “Becoming a Participant Observer” (DCA, Chapter 1)	Visual survey of Main Street Meet at location TBD on Main Street
T 9-30	Borman et al, “Observing a Workplace” (DCA, Chapter 7) Price, “Carrying Out a Structure Observation” (DCA, Chapter 8)	Preliminary bibliography due at the start of class
Th 10-2	Review DCA Chapter 7 and Chapter 8	In-class observation exercise Meet at the Southside Mall
T 10-7	Doukas, Chapters 8 and 9	
Th 10-9	No class – Yom Kippur	
T 10-14	Interview Excerpt from Agar, <i>The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography</i> Film: “Tell Me: Planning and Conducting a Successful Interview”	Observation report due at the start of class
Th 10-16	Angrosino, “Conducting a Life History	In-class interview exercise

	Interivew" (DCA, Chapter 3)	
T 10-21	Excerpt from Briggs, <i>Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research</i>	Interview plan due at the start of class
Th 10-23	Doukas, Chapters 10 and 11	Meet at location TBD on Main Street OR visit to Herkimer County Historical Society
T 10-28	Qualitative data analysis Redfern-Vance, "Analyzing Narrative Data" (DCA, Chapter 4)	
Th 10-30	Quantitative data analysis Rees, "Working with Numerical Data" (DCA, Chapter 10)	
T 11-4	Virtual ethnography Bird and Barber, "Constructing a Virtual Ethnography" (DCA, Chapter 13) Wolfe and Hagen, "Developing an Electronic Ethnography" (DCA, Chapter 14)	
Th 11-6	Visual anthropology Bird, "Applying Visual Methods in Ethnographic Research" (DCA, Chapter 12)	
T 11-11	Huhndorf, "Nanook and His Contemporaries: Imagining Eskimos in American Culture, 1897-1922" (Angel) Film: "Nanook of the North"	
Th 11-13	Film: "Kabloonak: The Stranger"	
T 11-18	Film: "Kabloonak: The Stranger"	
Th 11-20	No class	Interview recording and transcript due at 5pm
T 11-25 Th 11-27	No class - Thanksgiving	
T 12-2	Ethnographic writing Selections from Malinowski, <i>Argonauts of the Western Pacific</i> and Evans-Pritchard, <i>The Nuer</i> Excerpt from John Van Maanen, <i>Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography</i>	
Th 12-4	No class – Individual conferences	Data analysis report due at the start of class
T 12-9	Behar, "Ethnography in a Time of Blurred Genres" (Angel)	
Th 12-11	Film: "Primates Like Us"	Revised project description and annotated bibliography due at the start of class
T 12-16	Final	Poster presentation at 12noon