

## 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 2010  
Fitzelle 318  
TTh 2-3:15pm**

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Office hours: T 1:15-2pm, W 2-3:45pm, Th 1:15-2pm & by appointment

### **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.

Credit: 3 s.h.

Prerequisites: ANTH 100 and permission of instructor (LA, WS2)

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course is designed for majors and minors in anthropology. As an upper division course, it introduces material at a more advanced level and pace that will prepare you for graduate studies.

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.** To do this end, students will design and undertake team research on the experience of college. Individually, 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.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Your final grade will be based on completing all of the following requirements. *Failure to meet any one of the requirements can result in a failing grade.* This course is modeled on a studio class or workshop. In addition to reading assignments, class discussions, and student presentations, which will cover both methodological and theoretical 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:

### **Blog entries (5 points each)**

- Post a blog entry of 250 to 300 words on Angel on assigned dates (see Course Schedule below)
- 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

### **Proposal summary for *My Freshman Year* (10 points)**

- Write a 500-word proposal summary as though you were Rebekah Nathan, describing and explaining the purpose and aims of your research and the methods that you plan to employ

### **Annotations for literature review (15 points)**

- Each student will be responsible for contributing annotations on three (3) sources

### **Proposal summary for 355 project (10 points)**

- Write a 500-word proposal summary that describes (1) the purpose, aims, and methods of your individual research, and (2) explains how it contributes to the team research

### **Field report: Participant/observation (20 points)**

- Select a field site
- Participate / Observe
- Take notes
- Write a report that (1) describes your fieldwork and what you observed and (2) considers connections to the 355 project
- Minimum of 3 full pages, maximum of 4 full pages: Double-spaced, in 12 point font

### **Interview schedule (15 points)**

- Prepare a preliminary schedule for class, then submit a revised schedule
- In addition to the questions that you propose to ask, describe in 250 to 300 words why you have chosen to interview this particular person and the kinds of questions that you intend to ask

### **Interview transcript (20 points)**

- Record an interview for your project
- Transcribe

### **Preliminary analysis of interview transcript (10 points)**

- Code your interview transcript
- Write a 500-word summary that describes concepts or themes discussed in the interview and explains their relevance to the 355 project

### **Preliminary analysis of data (20 points)**

- Describe findings from your individual research, including literature review, participant-observation, and interview
- Minimum of 3 full pages, maximum of 4 full pages: Double-spaced, in 12 point font

### **Presentation of conference paper (Final) (30 points)**

- Describe findings from your individual research and explain their relevance to the 355 project
- Minimum of 7 full pages, maximum of 8 full pages: Double-spaced, in 12 point font
- Details to be discussed

## **COURSE POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

ANTH 355 contributes to the major and minor in anthropology. Regular attendance and participation in class is *required*.

There are legitimate reasons for being absent from class (sickness, personal trauma, etc.) *It is the student's responsibility to inform the professor about the absence prior to or close after its occurrence.* Frequent absence from class, legitimate or illegitimate, constitutes absenteeism. *Absenteeism will lower one's course grade, and may result in failure.* Missing two or more classes puts you in danger of absenteeism. If you anticipate missing class because you are a student-athlete, you must identify yourself to the professor early in the course.

*Remember also that students are responsible for all of the material covered in class.* Make-ups for full credit will be permitted only for officially documented ("excused") absences, such as conferences or competitions. Make-ups for partial credit will be permitted for other absences.

### **ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING**

This is a reading and discussion-intensive class. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss readings. Although it is not necessary for you to bring all of your books to every meeting of this class, **you are required to bring your reading assignment (textbook, reader, ethnography, or hard copy of PDF).**

Creating an environment for learning conducive to learning involves community effort. Individually, we will conduct ourselves in a manner that is respectful, considerate, and courteous of each other. Students are expected to arrive on time for class, and the professor is expected to end on time. Students are expected to refrain from conversation not directly relevant to the material at hand and from the use of cellular phones, iPods, etc., during classes. **If you wish to use a laptop during class, you must receive the instructor's permission.**

The Student Code of Conduct can be accessed at <http://www.oneonta.edu/development/studevel.asp>.

### **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](http://www.aaanet.org).

### **ANGEL**

All students will be expected to use 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

### **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.**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	READING ASSIGNMENT	RESEARCH ACTIVITY
Th 8/26	Introductions	
T 8/31	Essentials, Chapter 1 Ethnographic Fieldwork, "Fieldwork in Cultural Anthropology: An Introduction" (pp.1-28)	
Th 9/2	Ethnographic Fieldwork, Part I	Blog entry
T 9/7	Essentials, Chapter 2 My Freshman Year, Chapter 1 <i>Discussion of 355 project</i>	
Th 9/9	My Freshman Year, Chapters 2, 3, 4	Blog entry
T 9/14	My Freshman Year, Chapters 5, 6	
Th 9/16	My Freshman Year, Chapter 7 and Afterword	Blog entry
T 9/21	Essentials, Chapters 3, 4 <i>Discussion of literature review and research plan</i> <i>Discussion of human subjects protection and IRB process</i>	Proposal summary for My Freshman Year due at the start of class
Th 9/23	Essentials, Chapter 11 <i>Discussion of proposal summary for 355 project</i>	Annotations for literature review due at the start of class
T 9/28		Proposal summary for 355 project due at 5pm
BREAK		
T 10/5	Essentials, Chapters 5, 6	Completion of CITI program
Th 10/7	Essentials, Chapters 9, 10 <i>Discussion of participant-observation exercises</i>	
T 10/12	Ethnographic Fieldwork, Part II	
Th 10/14	<i>Participant-observation exercise 1</i>	Blog entry
T 10/19	Ethnographic Fieldwork, Part III	
Th 10/21	<i>Participant-observation exercise 2</i>	Blog entry
T 10/26	Essentials, Chapter 7	Field report due at the start of class
Th 10/28	<i>Discussion of interview exercises</i>	Preliminary interview schedule due at the start of class Revised interview schedule due Friday at 5pm
T 11/2	Ethnographic Fieldwork, Part IV	
Th 11/4	<i>Interview exercise</i>	Blog entry
T 11/9	Ethnographic Fieldwork, Part VII	
Th 11/11	<i>Interview exercise</i>	Blog entry
T 11/16	Essentials, Chapters 8, 12 <i>Coding exercise</i>	Interview transcript due at the start of class
Th 11/18		Preliminary analysis of interview transcript due at 5pm
BREAK		
T 11/30	Essentials, Chapters 13, 14, 15	
Th 12/2	<i>Discussion of final conference papers</i>	Preliminary analysis of data due Friday at 5pm
T 12/7	Ethnographic Fieldwork, Part IX	
Th 12/9	<i>Discussion of final conference papers</i>	
Th 12/16	<b>Presentation of final conference papers at 2pm</b>	