Upper-division Writing Requirement Review Form (12/1/08)

I. General Education Review - Upper-division Writing Requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept/Program Subject</th>
<th>Anthropology</th>
<th>Course # (i.e. ANTH 455) or sequence</th>
<th>ANTH 431</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Course(s) Title: Ethnographic Field Methods

Description of the requirement if it is not a single course

UG ANTH 431: Ethnographic Field Methods. Spring. Prerequisites.

II. Endorsement/Approvals

Complete the form and obtain signatures before submitting to Faculty Senate Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please type / print name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>G. G. Weix</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone / Email</td>
<td>6319</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Chair</td>
<td>John Douglas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Overview of the Course Purpose/Description

The course was created by Professor emeritus, Tobie Weist, after being taught experimentally twice, in 2000. It has been taught at least six times in the past decade, by adjuncts and tenure track faculty members, to enrollments between 12 and 30, including graduate students. The emphasis has been on learning ethnographic field techniques and methods, and demonstrating them on a project designed and conducted throughout the semester. Students become acquainted with the IRB review, and the instructor applies for a general approval of their projects, with the faculty member as supervisor for all in class ‘research’ conducted. Students read various methods manuals, including Fieldworking, and engage in exercises in various aspects of ethnographic work, including guided participant observation, oral history collection, interviewing, archival research, map making, surveys of small groups, and field journals. The writing component for the course includes a portfolio of at least seventy single spaced pages documenting the above methods, as well as an oral presentation of the research project, and its outcomes. While students do not write an ethnography during the semester, they present the completed portfolio as evidence of their competent mastery of the techniques prior to writing an ethnography, and their ability to collect and generate primary data from field research.

IV. Learning Outcomes: Explain how each of the following learning outcomes will be achieved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student learning outcomes: Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for academic inquiry</th>
<th>Students learn how to identify the appropriate technique or method for gaining access to communities and individuals who can provide responses to academic questions about their ways of life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources (see <a href="http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/">http://www.lib.umt.edu/informationliteracy/</a>)</td>
<td>Students learn to gather information from a number of sources and using a variety of methods, as well as discuss the success or failures of their attempts within small groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate</td>
<td>Students learn to record in a field journal their observations of others actions and conversations, distinguishing their own perceptions and opinions from that of their subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline</td>
<td>Students learn the ethical components of review and oversight to ethnographic field work, including addressing IRB panels, peers, and the subjects themselves in the process of doing field work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work</td>
<td>Students prepare a portfolio as a summary of primary data for ethnography. While they do not write the ethnography itself, they learn the value of accurate and clear recording of description and interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation appropriate to that discipline</td>
<td>Students learn the ethical and peer reviewed standards for documenting ethnographic observations and conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy</td>
<td>Students master various forms of technology used in ethnographic field methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**V. Writing Course Requirements Check list**

| Is enrollment capped at 25 students? If not, list maximum course enrollment. Explain how outcomes will be adequately met for this number of students. Justify the request for variance. | ■ Yes □ No |
| Are outcomes listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations? | ■ Yes □ No |
| Are detailed requirements for all written assignments including criteria for evaluation in the course syllabus? If not how and when will students be informed of written assignments? | ■ Yes □ No |
| Briefly explain how students are provided with tools and strategies for effective writing and editing in the major. | Students write 8-10 pages a week, and hand in the portfolios three times during the semester for review and comment by the instructor. |
| Will written assignments include an opportunity for revision? If not, then explain how students will receive and use feedback to improve their writing ability. | ■ Yes □ No |
| Are expectations for Information Literacy listed in the course syllabus? If not, how will students be informed of course expectations? | ■ Yes □ No |

**VI. Writing Assignments:** Please describe course assignments. Students should be required to individually compose at least 20 pages of writing for assessment. At least 50% of the course grade should be based on students’ performance on writing assignments. Clear expression, quality, and accuracy of content are considered an integral part of the grade on any writing assignment.
Formal Graded Assignments
Specific techniques are graded, such as formulating an interview, listing questions, conducting, recording, and transcribing the interview, and evaluating the outcome.

Informal Ungraded Assignments
Students take field notes throughout the semester.

**VII. Syllabus:** Paste syllabus below or attach and send digital copy with form. The syllabus should clearly describe how the above criteria are satisfied. For assistance on syllabus preparation see: http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/syllabus.html

---

**Anthropology 431: Ethnographic Methods**

G.G. Weix
P.M.
Office: SS 223
238
Tel. 243-6319
[ggweix@selway.umt.edu](mailto:ggweix@selway.umt.edu)
Office hours: MW 2-4 P.M.

**Class Time:** TR 11:10-12:30
**Room:** SS

**Course Description**

Ethnographic methods are not unique to the field of anthropology. Participant observation, daily detailed field notes, interviews and oral histories, and narrative analysis are used by many disciplines, from social sciences (sociology and political science) to humanities (literary criticism and history). However, anthropologists initiated and innovated these techniques of gathering information and gaining new knowledge about human diversity and ways of life. Ethnography means ‘writing about a way of life’ and the primary method of ethnographic projects is fieldwork. This refers to living with and sharing a way of life for an extended period of time. Fieldwork requires continuous residence in chronological time, usually over the course of a year or more in the places described.

Ethnographic methods are diverse, and eclectic; anthropologists often reflect upon their tradition of methods in relation to field-based research. The course readings about ethnography and methods focus on technique, justification, and epistemological questions about knowledge of social life and culture. They also address fieldwork ethics, combining field-based and archival research, debates about collaboration and authorial voice, differences of ethnography of small scale and complex societies, the historical legacy of colonialism and post-colonial context for cross-cultural research, and interdisciplinary academic fields and subjects (such as cultural studies) which have extended the visibility of ethnographic methods across the academy.

Ethnographic methods can be approached pragmatically as a series of steps and tasks: developing a research question and proposal, stating the relevant theoretical debates,
doing library and computer background research, submitting the proposal for human subjects review, planning field-based research, keeping a field journal, developing closed and open questionnaires, interviewing subjects, collecting oral histories, genealogies, or life histories, writing ethnographic field reports, giving an oral presentation of findings, narrative analysis, writing ethnography.

One final note: ethnography can include statistical analysis, but often relies more on narrative analysis. Interviews and questionnaires are used to generate text, not a data base. For this reason, we will not be studying social science methods, although a supplemental bibliography is provided. Other courses teaching statistical methods are available in Sociology and Psychology, as well as ANTH 381 and 382: Data Analysis and Advanced Data Analysis.

**Course Goals and Objectives**

1. To learn ethnographic methods, and be able to design and carry out a small project.
2. To learn field-based interviewing and be able to complete a sample of five to ten interviews.
3. To know some of the debates about how ethnographic methods are changing and expanding beyond anthropology into other academic fields.

**Instructional Method**

The course meets two times a week for 80 minutes each. Attendance is strongly recommended. Instruction will include short lecture, small group discussion and portfolio and journal work. Individual meetings with the instructor are also strongly encouraged, and email correspondence when appropriate.

**Course Policies**

Illness, family emergency, conflicts with other courses’ exams, and athletic participation are all valid reasons to miss class or reschedule assignments and exams. Particularly if you are sick, please stay home until you are well. Because we only meet twice a week, I will consider three absences in a row to be a sign that you are dropping the course. I am available in office hours by appointment for discussion of current topics or to make up assignments.

**Readings**

There are three required readings, which we will almost complete by Spring Break.

This book has dense, and variegated chapters with readings, explanatory text, exercises and questions, poetry in each section. We will highlight in class the major themes of each section, and I strongly recommend students practice the exercises in their journals for the first half of the course.

**Evaluation**

There are no exams for this course, rather, evaluation will be based on portfolios which consist of journals, writing exercises, interview transcriptions, and commentaries on the background literature. There will be two midterm assessments of each student’s progress, March 15th and April 19th at which time portfolios will be turned in and returned on March 25th (after Spring Break) and April 23rd. Final submission of portfolios is May 10th. There is no final exam for this course.

**Grading Criteria and Standards**

Enclosed on separate sheet. I ask students to write their own expectations and goals at the beginning of the course, and to respond to the grading criteria enclosed. At the end of the course, each student also writes a brief self-assessment of their writing for the course, and the grade they would assign themselves. I take these into consideration in assigning the final grade.

**Assignments**

A series of weekly writing assignments will be kept in a portfolio. Students will also meet with the instructor in office hours at least twice during the semester. Students will keep journals, with at least four entries a week, (and probably more during the second half of the course). The final product will be a portfolio of writing that consists of at least 50-75 pages of field notes, and a summary assessment paper of 10-15 pages.
Syllabus

Week One (January 29-31) Introductions and Expectations
Code of Ethics, Ethnography as a Genre
Methodology debates: art or science?
Read: Barrett pp. 1-79  Historical Overview and Part I: Building the Discipline
   Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, Part I: Understanding Cultures pp. 1-54

Week Two (February 5-7) Journals
Background research, journals
Read: Barrett, pp. 84-140, Part II: Patching the Foundation
   Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, Part II: Understanding Fieldwriting, pp. 55-104

Week Three (February 12-14) Observation
Participant /Observation and field notes
Read: Barrett, pp. 141-206, Part III: Demolition and Reconstruction
   Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, Part III, Understanding Texts, pp. 105-160

Week Four (February 19-21) Description
Thick Description
Read: Barrett, pp. 207-240 The Challenge of Analysis
   Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, Part IV, Locating Culture, pp. 159-216

Week Five (February 26-28) Archives
Archiving and Organizing
Read: Messerschmidt, Part I-Introduction, pp. 3-28
   Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, Part V, The Spatial Gaze, pp. 217-292

Week Six (March 5-7) Conversations
Interviews, Collaboration, Transcription
Read: Messerschmidt, Part II, Urban Studies, pp. 29-90
   Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, Part VI, The Cultural Translator, pp. 293-344

Week Seven (March 12-14) The Ethnographer’s Ear
Listening and Reflecting
Read: Messerschmidt, Part III, Rural Studies, pp.91-152
   Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, Part VII, The Collaborative Listener, pp. 345-416

Spring Break, March 16-24

Week Eight (March 26-28) Fieldworking
Read: Messerschmidt, Part IV, Heath Studies

Week Nine (April 2-4) Fieldworking
Read: Messerschmidt, Part V, Education Studies
Week Ten (April 9-11) Fieldworking
Read: Messerschmidt, Part VI, Contract Anthropology

Week Eleven (April 16-18) Fieldworking
Read: Messerschmidt, Part VII Reflections at Home

Week Twelve (April 23-25) Fieldworking
Student Presentations

Week Thirteen (April 30-May 2) Fieldworking
Student Presentations

Week Fourteen (May 7-9) Fieldworking
Student Presentations

May 10th Final Portfolios Due.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR METHODS/431


“Ethnography in/of the World System: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography.”
“The Uses of Complicity in the Changing Mise-en-Scene of Anthropological Fieldwork.”
“Requirements for Ethnographies of Late-Twentieth-Century Modernity Worldwide.”


“Units of observation: emic and etic approaches.”, “Art and Science in fieldwork.”, “Facts or Fictions? Fieldwork relationships and the nature of data.”, and “Locating an Informant.”


“Fieldwork, Culture, and Ethnography.”, “In Pursuit of Culture.”, and “Fieldwork, Culture, and Ethnography Revisited.”


Kreisworth, Martin. “Trusting the Tale: The Narrativist Turn in the Human Sciences.”

Wolf, Diane. “Situating Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork.”

Hsuing, Ping-Chun. “Between Bosses and Workers: The Dilemma of a Keen Observer.”

Wolf, Margery. “Afterward: Musings from an Old Gray Wolf

**Supplemental Social Sciences Sources**


Articles


