

ANTH. 358. The Process of Anthropological Research

Term: Winter 2021

Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 13.00 to 14.25

Classroom: Remote

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Introduction

This class will discuss the main issues involved in the process of designing anthropological research. During the course we will introduce the idea of ethnographic fieldwork and the social context that surrounds it (with special emphasis on ethics and politics). The students will learn to identify and polish research questions and to develop a research project designed to answer that question. Consequently, the students will be exposed to a large array of methodological devices. This class will have a significant component of actual hands-on ethnographic fieldwork. Finally, the class will conclude by discussing data interpretation and writing.

Learning Objectives

Students completing this course will be able to:

1. Formulate productive research questions within anthropological frameworks;
2. Apply various research techniques and methods to gather research data, including writing ethnographic field notes, collecting documentary photographs, participant observation, and conducting various types of ethnographic interview.
3. Translate raw material from their own field observations into an analytic ethnographic essay.

Readings

Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author. Clifford Geertz. 1989. Stanford University Press.

Evaluation

Assignment-Quiz	25%
Practicums (7 points each activity report)	35%
1) Religious ceremony ethnographic observation	
2) Interview (open ended versus closed questions)	
3) Collecting a life story	
4) Collect a genealogy	
5) Coding information	
Written report on " <i>Works and Lives</i> " (report due before class)	10%
Final paper (research proposal)	30%

“In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.”

Regarding Remote Delivery

The remote learning context presents new challenges for all involved, and student engagement is of particular concern. Our hope for this class is that we can experiment together and find ways to build intellectual community despite our physical distance. Let’s just remember that this is a complicated time for everyone that takes us out of our so-called zones of comfort. Let’s use that as a possibility for shaking things up and finding new ways of being together.

We will be recording all of our classes, although we strongly urge you to attend “in-person”. Students must consent to being recorded if they are attending a lecture or participating in a component of a course that is being recorded. Students will be notified through a ‘pop-up’ box in Zoom if a lecture is being recorded. If they are not comfortable being in a class that is recorded, students may decide to not take part by logging off Zoom. We will make class video recordings available in MyCourses so that students who log off will be able to later watch the recording. Here is McGill’s statement on recording:

Please read the Guidelines on Remote Teaching and Learning [<https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/strategies/guidelines-remote>]. You will be notified through a ‘pop-up’ box in Zoom if a lecture or portion of a class is being recorded. By remaining in sessions that are recorded, you agree to the recording, and you understand that your image, voice, and name may be disclosed to classmates. You also understand that recordings will be made available in myCourses to students registered in the course.

To make these sessions more personable, we encourage everyone to enable the video function. This is not a requirement, and you will not be penalized for having your video turned off.

Course Calendar

		Content	Assignments
Jan	7	Introduction/ principles of anthropology	
	12	Scientific method/ anthropology and fieldwork	
	14	Practicums and the site	
	19	Research Design and Sampling	
	21	Observation, description, writing: participant observation and positionality	
	26	Interviewing and questions	Act. 1
	28	Ethics	
Feb.	2	Library	
	4	On writing	Act. 2
	9	Demography and History	
	11	Ethnobiological methods	
	16	Econometrics	Act. 3
	18	Network and spatial analysis	
	23	Institutional analysis	
	25	Discursive analysis	Act. 4
Mar.	2	Community Based Participatory Ethnography	
	4	<i>Study break</i>	
	9	<i>Study break</i>	
	11	Guest lecture 1 Affect	Act. 5
	16	Guest lecture 2 Ethnobiology	
	18	Guest lecture 3 Institutional	
	23	Writing Ethnography	Report
	25	Guest lecture 4 Visual	
	30	Assignment-Quiz	
Apr.	1	Guest lecture 5 Quantitative	
	6	Guest lecture 4 Ethnography of the non-human	
	8	Guest lecture 6 Religion	Assign.-quiz
	13	Summary	Final paper

January

T. 7th

Introduction. The process of research. Themes of enquiry, theoretical and methodological diversity. Principles of Sociocultural Anthropology.

Th. 12th

Scientific Method: Fieldwork and Ethnography in Anthropology.

1. Boas, F. 1920. The Methods of Ethnology. *American Anthropologist* 22 (4): 311-321.
2. Malinowski, B. 1922. The Methods and Scope of Anthropological Fieldwork. In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagos of Melanesian New Guinea*. London: Routledge & Kegan.

T. 14th

Discussing the activities. Questions (basic data, location, production, origin, context,...). Locating field sites: bounded sites, multi-sited ethnography, networks and mobile methods.

3. Ferguson, J. and Gupta, A., 2008. Beyond 'culture': space, identity, and the politics of difference. In *The cultural geography reader* (pp. 72-79). Routledge.
4. Hannerz, U., 2003. Being there... and there... and there! Reflections on multi-site ethnography. *Ethnography*, 4(2), pp.201-216.
5. Candea, M., 2007. Arbitrary locations: in defence of the bounded field-site. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13(1), pp.167-184.

Th. 19th

Research Design, Sampling, and Methodology (scale, timing, sampling,...)

T. 21st

Observation, description, writing: participant observation and positionality

6. DeWalt, K. and B. DeWalt. 2011. *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, pp. 41-78.

Th. 26th

Interviewing and Questions

T. 28th

Ethics and research. Guest speaker: Deanna Colin
(Review Ethics Board, McGill).

7. Bourgois, P., 1990. Confronting anthropological ethics: Ethnographic lessons from Central America. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(1), pp.43-54.

American Anthropological Association, Code of Ethics:

<http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>

Human Terrain System (Case study): http://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-aaa/files/production/public/FileDownloads/pdfs/pdf/EB_Resolution_110807.pdf)

AAA Statement on Human Terrain System:

<https://www.americananthro.org/ConnectWithAAA/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=1626>

February

Th. 2nd

Library. Guest speaker: Nikki Tummon

T. 4th

On Writing fieldnotes and ethnography

8. Kondo, D. The Eye/I. 1990. In *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-48.
9. Clifford Geertz, Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (Basic Books, 1977) pp. 3-30.
10. Emerson, et al. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, Chps 1 & 2.
11. Clifford, J., 1983. On ethnographic authority. *Representations*, (2), pp.118-146.

Th. 9th

Demography. History: Written (archival research), oral (genealogies, life stories).

T. 11th
Ethnobiological methods

Th. 16th
Household econometrics

T. 18th
Network and Spatial Analysis.

Th. 23th
Institutional Analysis

T. 25th
Discursive Analysis.

March

Th. 2nd
Community Based Participatory Ethnography

T. 4th
Study break

Th. 9th
Study break

T. 11th
Guest speaker. Samuele Collu. Ethnography of Affect (reading tbd).

Th. 16th
Guest speaker. Colin Scott. Ethnobiology (reading tbd).

T. 18th
Guest speaker. Ron Niezen (reading tbd).

Th. 23th
Writing Ethnography. [Geertz. C. *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*].

T. 25th
Guest speaker. Diana Allan. Visual Anthropology (reading tbd).

Th. 30th
Assignment Quiz Due

April

T. 1st
Guest speaker. Eran Shor. Quantitative research (reading tbd).

Th. 6th

Guest speaker. Eduardo Kohn. Ethnography of the non-human (reading tbd).

T. 8th

Guest speaker. Katherine Lemons. Doing research on religion (reading tbd).

Th. 13th

Summary (Research proposal due).

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.