Course Outline

FMED 690: Advanced Ethnography: Context, Complexity & Coordination (3 credits)

Instructor: Peter Nugus (PhD)
Assistant Professor, Department of Family Medicine &
Centre for Medical Education, McGill University: peter.nugus@mcgill.ca

Time: 9am-12pm: Mondays and Tuesdays: Jan 11 – Mar 21, 2016 (14 sessions)
(Please note that classes will not be held each Monday and Tuesday;
please consult weekly course schedule under “Course content”, below)

Location: Department of Family Medicine, 5858 Chemin de Côte-des-Neiges, 3rd floor

Contact details: Via MyCourses

Calendar Course Description: Addresses the rationale and assumptions of ethnography,
including the practices, processes and strategies to engage participants, and set up, conduct,
analyze, write up and provide feedback to participants. This exploration will come from a project
based on deep and immersed observation, and other assignments, in order to develop an
understanding of shared meaning systems (i.e., cultures).

Learning outcomes
By the end of the course, students should:
1. Understand the rationale and assumptions behind ethnography to be able to assess its
appropriateness for particular research questions, and as a foundation for assessing the
credibility and trustworthiness of a particular ethnographic study;
2. Be able to design, manage and conduct an ethnographic project from conception to a
knowledge translation and educational product for participants.
3. Be comfortable debating, using empirical evidence, and arguments from conceptual
literature, ethnography’s definition, possibilities, limits and practical contributions to
organization, health care delivery and health education.

Instructional method
Instructional methods balance student-led and case-based discussion, with formal presentations.

Required texts

Assignments and Evaluations
Students will be evaluated on their performance in two written assignments, an oral presentation
and participation. There are no exams in this course. The oral presentation will be devoted to one
of the scheduled topics each week. The presentation will be 30 minutes followed by discussion.
It will be necessary to read beyond the sources for the presentation. Slides must be submitted.
The first written assignment will relate to a conceptual or methodological challenge in undertaking ethnography, raised in relation to or while listening to one of the presentations, or while undertaking the readings each week. The first written assignment is due **Monday, February 22**. It will be about 2,000 words in length.

The second written assignment will relate directly to the practical ethnographic exercise which will be discussed in the first class, and workshopped in Session 8. It is due **Monday, April 21**. This assignment will take one of two forms depending on the student’s choice. It can take the form of a 4,000-word methodological proposal for an ethnographic thesis or journal article, with a 1,000-word appendicized account of findings. Alternatively, it can take the form of a 5,000-word journal article, incorporating literature / theory, methods, findings and discussion. Of the discussion: one paragraph must comprise knowledge mobilization to policy and practice; one paragraph must translate the findings to education; and one paragraph must elaborate the requirements the case for a participatory action research project.

Participation will be based on attendance, punctuality, reliability, respect and courtesy for others, and active and literature-informed participation in class discussions. Written assignments will need to be uploaded into MyCourses before the commencement of class on the date on which it is due. Late assignments will be penalized at 10% per day unless an extension has been granted by the instructor or in the case of an emergency. Written and verbal instructions for each assignment will be given in class.

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<tr>
<th>Assessment task</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentation on conceptual or methodological challenge</td>
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<td>Written response to another’s conceptual or methodological challenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written proposal of ethnographic methodological or findings study</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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100%

**Course Content**

**Session 1: Monday, January 11**

**Topic:** *Introduction: What is ethnography, and how will our learning proceed?*

*Workshop 1* (and order of student presentations)

No set readings

**Session 2: Tuesday, January 12**

**Topic:** *What counts as ethnography and why do it?*

**Readings:**

### Session 3: Monday, January 18

**Topic:** How do we do ethnography? Access, engagement, and the role and identity of the ethnographer

**Readings:**


### Session 4: Tuesday, January 19

**Topic:** How do we do participant observation? Access, engagement, data collection & recording

**Readings:**


### Session 5: Monday, January 25

**Topic:** Between the field and its products: How do we analyze ethnographic data?

**Readings:**

Session 6: Tuesday, January 26 (Presentations commence)

**Topic:** What role does the form of ethnography have on the role and identity of the researcher?

**Readings:**


Session 7: Monday, February 1

**Topic:** How does one resolve political and ethical dilemmas?

**Readings:**


Session 8: Tuesday, February 2

**Topic:** Project workshop (and literature-based discussion)


Session 9: Monday, February 8

**Topic:** Assumptions of ethnography: What views of knowledge & the world do its various forms presume?

**Readings:**


**Session 10: Tuesday, February 9**

**Topic:** The postmodern turn? What is the role of theory, “reliability” and “validity” in ethnography?

**Readings:**


**Session 11: Monday, February 22**

**Topic:** Educational ethnography: How is it used and what does it tell us about learning?

**Readings:**


**Session 12: Monday, March 7**

**Topic:** Ethnography, governance & technology: What can we learn about modernity & change?

**Readings:**

Session 13: Monday, March 14

Topic: What do we produce? Ethnographic writing or just another study?

Readings:


Session 14: Monday, March 21

Topic: For transformation or understanding only? What is the role and potential of ethnography in knowledge translation, education, empowerment and transformation?

Readings:


McGill Policy Statements

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

End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.