

Ethnography in a Community Context

Instructor: Nicole Lamers, PhD (lamers@illinois.edu)

Meeting Time: Wednesdays and Fridays 10:00-10:50 in Room 15ED

Synopsis:

This course introduces students to ethnographic enquiry and develops their English language skills, cultural awareness and intercultural competence through a small-scale ethnographic enquiry undertaken in the local context. This involves data collection, analysis and the reporting of results. To prepare students for the larger ethnographic project, we will explore the nature of ethnography, some of the methods used within ethnographic approaches and read a variety of samples of ethnographic works.

Objectives:

To enable students to

- a. Develop initial competence in ethnographic enquiry;
- b. Develop intercultural competence, specifically in Study Abroad context;
- c. Analyze and deconstruct the experiences, emotions and perceptions encountered when immersed in a new environment;
- d. Develop proficiency in using English within the context of an ethnographic enquiry in a predominantly English-speaking multi-cultural environment.

Content

- a. A brief introduction to ethnography:
 - a. Defining ethnographic approaches;
 - b. Selecting basic anthropological concepts and methods relevant to projects;
 - c. Understanding and utilizing basic methods of observation and interview to elicit rich descriptions;
 - d. Collecting data through field work;
 - e. Understanding and employing basic methods of recording, analyzing and interpreting field data.
- b. Opportunities for ethnographic enquiry in the university context:
 - a. Identifying possible sites of interaction and associated topics
 - b. Developing a proposal for a small project
 - c. Conducting the project
 - d. Presentation of research results

Assessment

An ethnographic project will be conducted either individually or in groups of no more than three, preferably with an individual focus for each student. There will be a variety of assessment opportunities in this course. The first will be the assignments leading up to the major project. You will submit a written plan for your final project toward the beginning of the semester. This will outline your topic and your plans for conducting the research. Once you have started to make some progress, you will be required to present your 'In-Progress' status to the group for mutual feedback. Additionally, you will do a longer final presentation toward the end of the semester. Finally, you will submit a final report summarizing your topic, methods and research. Finally, participation and attendance are essential to this process.

a. Participation and Attendance	(50 and 50pts)	10%
b. Assignments	(5X40pts)	20%
c. Written Plan for Final Project	(150pts)	15%
d. In-Progress Oral Presentation	(150pts)	15%
e. Final In-Class Presentation	(200pts)	20%
f. Final Written Report	(200pts)	20%

Major Due Dates:

Written Plan for Final Project	Friday, February 25th
In-Progress Oral Presentation	Wednesday, March 30 th and Friday, April 1 st
Final Written Report	Friday, May 13th

Please note that assignments and due dates may be altered to better serve student interest and needs. Advanced notice will be given on any changes. Copies of reading materials will be provided.

Date	Topic	Assignment
Friday February 4 th	Introduction to course	Read Introduction (pp. 1-40) in Noblit, G.W. (1999) <i>Particularities: Collected Essays on Ethnography and Education</i> . Peter Lang: New York.
Wednesday February 9 th	People, Place, Particularities and Positionality	Read pp 1-26 in "Map of Block" (pp. 14-15) in Kutsche, P. (1998) <i>Field Ethnography: A Manual for Doing Cultural Anthropology</i> . Prentice Hall: New Jersey. Instead of a block, you will need to do the 'Campus Paths, Places' activity which will be distributed in class. Due Friday, February 11th
Friday February 11 th	Perspective	Read pp 1-50 in Liu, J; Ross, H & Kelly, D. (2000) <i>The Ethnographic Eye: An Interpretive Study of Education in China</i> . Falmer Press: New York and London.

Wednesday February 16th		
Friday February 18th		
Wednesday February 23rd		
Friday February 25th		
Wednesday March 2nd		
Friday March 4th		
Wednesday March 9th		
Friday March 11th		
Wednesday March 16th		
Friday March 18th		
Wednesday March 23rd		
Friday March 25th		

Wednesday March 30th		
Friday April 1st		
Wednesday April 6th		
Friday April 8th		
Wednesday April 13th		
Friday April 15th		
Wednesday April 20th		
Friday April 22nd	Prepare for EUI conference (April 26th)	
Wednesday April 27th		
Friday April 29th		
Wednesday May 4th	Wrap-Up	
Friday May 13th	Final Paper Due	