This course is designed to provide students with a hands-on introduction to qualitative research methods. It is centered around a fieldwork project, through which you will explore the basics of qualitative research, including entering the field, participant/observation, writing ethnographic fieldnotes, the art of interviewing, and data analysis. Readings for the course will cover both the practical aspects of conducting fieldwork as well as current debates concerning the positionality of the researcher; writing, voice, and reflexivity; “critical” methods of inquiry; locating culture; and methods for analyzing and interpreting data.

This course traditionally engages students from a wide range of disciplines. Yet fieldwork is usually motivated by a research question specific to a field, and by the background of research already done on that subject. While qualitative researchers are open to discovering the unexpected in the course of their work, they also enter the field with research questions and hypotheses, and conduct their research in dialogue with these questions. We will therefore read examples of qualitative research throughout the term, and touch briefly upon current debates in education as touchstones for considering how to integrate your research question, field research, and data analysis.

This course is part of The Ethnography of the University Initiative (EUI) [www.eotu.uiuc.edu](http://www.eotu.uiuc.edu). EUI is a campus-wide project, committed to engaging students in the research process and to meaningfully interrogating the U of I and its surrounding environs. It is also committed to the creation of an on-line database that allows students to draw on and contribute to other students’ research. We will be using Moodle as an on-line environment in which you can document (input/upload) your research process. Throughout the semester your work will be visible by the entire class; at the end of the semester you will have the option to archive your EUI project (either with your name or with a pseudonym) or to have your EUI project not archived. Questions specific to the EUI component of the class should be directed to Jason Romero ([jasoncromero@gmail.com](mailto:jasoncromero@gmail.com)) or Heese Kim ([hkim19@uiuc.edu](mailto:hkim19@uiuc.edu)). Find the moodle at [https://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu](https://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu) under "EUI" in the list of courses for Spring 2009.

Students who are planning to use the research conducted in the class as the start of a larger research project (e.g. an early research project, masters’ thesis, etc.) are encouraged to secure their own independent IRB. We will discuss this procedure in detail in class.

**Required texts**


Articles on e-reserves at the UIUC library.

**Academic Integrity:**

You are expected to adhere to the UIUC guidelines for academic integrity. See the definition of academic misconduct at [http://www.research.uiuc.edu/ai/definition.asp](http://www.research.uiuc.edu/ai/definition.asp)

**Course requirements**

The course will be centered around a fieldwork project at a site of your own choosing. This site may be one you are already doing research at or otherwise a member of, or it may be a site you are entirely new to. You will be required to conduct fieldwork observations and several assignments related to your site, including 1) a proposal 2) fieldnotes 3) interviews 4) short writing exercises and 5) a final project report of approximately 20 pgs. Assignments marked “assignment” on the syllabus are things you need to prepare, but not hand in; those marked “due” should be handed in.

**Class Website:**

You should all join the class website on the EUI moodle: [http://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu](http://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu) Handouts, discussion questions, and syllabi will be posted there. I will also email you periodically using the moodle server so it is important that you register officially on the site.

**Grading**

20% class participation
40% short assignments
40% final paper
January 21  
Introduction

Presentation by Jason Romero, EUI
Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography* Ch. 1
Geertz, Clifford. 1973. Thick Description. In *The Interpretation of Cultures*
Optional: Sapir, Edward 1927. The Unconscious Patterning of Behavior in
Society.

January 28  
Ethnography/Ethics

Bettie, Julie. 2003. *Women without Class*
Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography* Ch. 10
Code of Ethics of the AAA
The Belmont Report

Due: Post a preliminary research question/plan; Comment on your group
members’ questions and plans

February 4  
Research Design

Maxwell, Joseph A. *Qualitative Research Design.*
Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography* Ch. 2
  Multiculturalism: An “Asian American” Campus Church. Shorter version

Assignment: Complete human subjects training module
(*http://irb.illinois.edu/*) and core CITI modules, along with any necessary
additional modules (research with children, international subjects, school
research, internet research). [If necessary, fill out an HS-1]

February 11  
Entering the Field

Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography* Ch. 3

Assignment: joint participant observation exercise

February 18  
Researchers’ roles
Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography* Ch. 4

**Assignment: Researcher role post**

**February 25 Fieldnotes**

Emerson, Robert M. et al. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* Ch. 1-5
Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography* Ch. 7

**Assignment: Insider/outsider assignment**

**March 4 Interviewing (1)**

Weiss, Robert. *Learning from Strangers* Ch. 1-5

**Due: Fieldnotes**
**Bring copies of your interview questions to class for your group**

**March 11 Interviewing (2)**

Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography* Ch. 5

**Assignment: Interview assignment #1**
**Post: Refine your research question/plan.**
March 18  Discourse Analysis


March 26  Spring Break

April 1  Documents, Artifacts, Visual Representations

Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. Ethnography Ch. 6

Bring in 4-6 documents or objects from your field site today
Due: Interview assignment #2

April 8  Data analysis (1)


April 15  Data analysis (2)

Emerson, Robert M. et al. Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes Ch. 6
Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. Ethnography Ch. 8
LeCompte, Margaret & Jean Schensul. 1999. Fine Tuning Results. Analyzing and Interpreting Ethnographic Data Ch. 10
Recommended: LeCompte, Margaret and Jean Schensul. 1999. Analysis from the Top Down. Analyzing and Interpreting Ethnographic Data Ch. 4

Due: Emic concept exercise
April 22   Writing


Emerson, Robert M. et al. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* Ch. 7-8

Weiss, Robert. *Learning from Strangers* Ch. 7


Due: Sample data analysis

April 29   Critical ethnography


May 6   Practitioner/Action research


Final project reports due May 11th in my box by 5 pm. NO EXTENSIONS.