

Syllabus & Policies
Rhetoric 105, Section M1
Ethnography of the University
T-Th, 9:30-10:45
English Building 156
University of Illinois
Fall 2008

Lecturer: John Griswold

Email: jgriswld@illinois.edu (the best way to contact me)

Phone: 333-4951

Office hours: Wednesdays (12:30-1:50), or by appointment, 220 English Building

Required Texts and Materials:

- *Fieldworking*, 3rd ed., Bonnie Stone Sunstein and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater
- Course packet at Notes & Quotes, 502 E. John St.
- 3-ring binder for ALL drafts and revisions in hard copy
- Access to a tape recorder for an interview, and a camera

Course Objectives:

Being a fluent writer—no matter what field you go into—demands that you be fair, coherent and specific. Together we'll develop those skills through ethnography, which seeks to reveal how particular cultures construct and understand experience. Your writing will become a way of thinking, seeing, searching for patterns and meaning, and communicating clearly when faced with a complex set of tasks and issues, as this class demands gradual but *continuous* progress toward a longish ethnographic essay, and reflection on the process of coming to know. In the process, you will start to identify your own assumptions, try to see others for what they are, and attempt to represent, in words, their cultural experience as well as possible.

Policies and Procedures

Assignments: Please use a standard font and type size for all assignments, including those uploaded to Moodle. Anything workshopped in class must be double-spaced printed, and copied. Put your name, the date, section letter, and my name in a corner.

Assignments must be posted to Moodle one hour before class, or as specified. If you have questions or difficulties with any assignment, talk to me *before* it is due. Late assignments will affect your participation grade, and I will not review them after they're one week late. Impromptu work may not be made up. You must keep all drafts, notes, outlines, and sources of all your work. Back up your disks and print hard copies of everything *often*, and put all of this in your pocket folder. **To receive a passing grade for the course you must complete the Moodle Inquiry with its component parts, the final ethnographic essay, the self-reflective essay with portfolio, and the class presentation.**

Attendance: It's impossible to succeed at a process, which writing is *all* about, unless you're there to participate in the process. Classes will build on each other, so absences make things harder than they have to be. I highly recommend no more than two absences, and after four, your final grade will drop 1/3-letter grade with each subsequent absence. Tardiness of more than ten minutes is an absence. Individual conferences count the same as classes.

Class presentation/student conference is a 10-minute display/explanation of points in your research that were meaningful in the process of reaching understanding.

Consent forms need to be signed any time you interview a person or spend significant time observing him or her. I (and the EUI office) will also need a consent form from you at the end of the semester to share your project and writing with others in our community.

EUI is short for Ethnography of the University Initiative, a large (and growing) community of student and faculty scholars who are reading, thinking, and writing about our campus. See <<http://www.eui.uiuc.edu/>> for more info. This section will look at honors, study abroad, and gen-ed subcultures.

Fieldwork is going out to observe, talk to, and think about people in their environment. This will require two to five or more hours per week, beyond the time needed for the work listed on the syllabus. Please plan accordingly, and above all, *do it safely*. It's important always to remember that your goal is never to "find out the right thing," about your subculture, or to "identify a problem," or "fix a problem." It's about finding out *their* story from *their* point of view, and your own intellectual and emotional reactions to being there.

Moodle is an online site where we'll archive much of our work. As we build content, we'll share it electronically with each other and with others interested in ethnography. See <<https://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu/course/view.php?id=59>>.

My office is in Room 220 of the English Building. Go up either stairwell to the second floor, turn right, go to the end of the hall.

Participation is 10-15% of your grade. Please prepare for class adequately and come with something to say. Also be prepared to give and take constructive criticism in peer workshops.

Peer workshoping is where you offer helpful comments, both written and oral, when reading others' work. Spotting confusion, or an interesting passage, in others' work will help you spot it in your own. Some of this will be done online in Moodle. When I tell you, you'll need to bring the required number of hard copies of your paper to class. If you do not participate in workshop sessions, real or virtual, your participation grade will suffer.

Plagiarism: In recent years, plagiarism has become a serious problem nationwide chiefly because there are now so many good websites and it is so easy to copy material from them. Our university has a very strict code for academic integrity called "Article 1, Part 4." According to that rule, using material from an uncited source as if it were your own is an academic violation and not to be tolerated (it is tantamount to a theft of ideas). Ignorance about the rule will not serve as an excuse for breaking it. Please understand that plagiarizers are treated as violators of the code of academic integrity; their work is sent to the Dean's Office where it is kept on record, and repeat offenders are usually suspended or even asked to leave the university. Such cases are deeply distressing to everyone—please do not risk becoming one of them. For precise details about what "plagiarism" means and how it is dealt with, please consult the following web address: <<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/ugl/howdoi/plagiarism.html>>.

Portfolio/self-reflective essay/cognitive map is the behind-the-scenes story of your research. It is not your "best work," but rather a documentation of your learning process, as well as an analysis of your own writing and inquiry processes. You will identify "hot spots" in your map, create a collection of meaningful data, material, notes and reflections that exemplify these hot

spots, and write a final reflective essay on why you included each and what they “say” to you as a developing thinker and writer.

The Writers’ Workshop is in 251 Undergrad Library. Other branches are in Grainger Engineering Library, Natural History, and Weston. The staff will help you with both basic and advanced writing skills, and I highly recommend their services.

<http://www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/wworkshop/index.htm> We’re all here to help you succeed.

Grading standards:

- A (Outstanding work)
- B (Good, above average work)
- C (Satisfactory, average work)
- D (Below average work)
- E (Poor work)

Please note: I will write only my questions, comments and suggestions for revision on your work, not a number or letter grade, except for the final ethnographic essay and the final portfolio. If, at any time during the semester, grade anxiety washes over you, please come to see me in my office with all your written work and all the lead-up to it, and I’ll be happy to discuss your standing in the course.

Coursework Breakdown:

Moodle Inquiry (incl. 3 short essays, an interview w/condensed narrative, and 2 annotated bibliographies), graded on effort	30%
Final ethnographic essay, 12+ pages	30%
Self-reflective essay, 4-6 pages, and portfolio	20%
Class presentation or student conference, 10 minutes	5%
Quizzes (if none, this rolls into participation)	5%
Class participation, incl. peer workshops	10%

Please note: Components of the Moodle Inquiry, the final ethnographic essay, and the self-reflective essay/portfolio must be submitted on the days indicated; late materials will be marked down one full letter grade each calendar day. All work must be submitted by 12/10/08 to pass this course. Class presentation must be given on assigned day, as there will be no opportunity for make-ups. There is no final exam for this class.

Syllabus and policies may be revised slightly as we go along. Changes discussed in class take precedence over information printed here. Another reason to make it to class—on time!

Course Readings and Assignments

FW = Fieldworking. P = Course Packet.

Italicized information is daily work due at the start of that class.

Items in boldface are bigger assignments due that day.

There may be additional readings and writing on a daily basis.

It is your responsibility to catch up when absent.

Week 1

T, 8/26

Welcome to Rhet 105! Discussion of policies, goals, the writing classroom and ethnography.

R, 8/28

Read Chapter 1 of FW for today's class.

In class: Brainstorming subcultures. Positioning. Begin cognitive maps.

Week 2

T, 9/2

Read Chapters 1-3 of My Freshman Year (P).

Site proposal due today.

R, 9/4

Go to <<http://www.fieldworking.com/main/hallFamel/index.html>> and look at "Searching for the Magic Bus," and "Mapping the Middle Ground."

Read Chapter 2 of FW.

Meet in FLB Room G17. Virtual tour of the EUI site and Moodle.

Week 3

T, 9/9

Read pp. 130-148 and 175-220 in FW.

R, 9/11

Reading: John McPhee and Orville Schell (P)

3-pg. essay on positioning due.

Prose as a "little machine made of words." What do you see? What makes you say that?

Week 4

T, 9/16

3-pg. artifact/site analysis essay due today.

Library day. Meet in Wohlers Hall computer lab.

R, 9/18

Library day

Week 5

T, 9/23

Annotated bib of print sources due, with detailed notes from most useful one.

Read pp. 237-271, FW

In class: See pp. 169-74, *FW*.

R, 9/25

Meet in FLB G17. Research web for materials.

Read pp. 302-306, FW.

Schedule interview with informant for this week.

Week 6

T, 9/30

Annotated bib of 10 URLs, with extensive analysis, notes, and quotes from the most useful one, due today.

- In class: Film
- R, 10/2** Film, cont'd.
- Week 7**
- T, 10/7** *Read from Gig, Terkel, Santoli (and skim Balaban interview), (P)*
Discuss Churm interviews, esp. business prof
- R, 10/9** *Read Chapter 6 (FW).*
What is a story, anyway? Some views on that.
- Week 8**
- T, 10/14** **4-pg. interview/glossary & condensed narrative due**
Read MFK Fisher (P) and pp. 419-427 (FW)
- R, 10/16** *Read Grann, "City of Water" (P)*
- Week 9**
- T, 10/21** *Read pp. 427-470 (FW)*
- R, 10/23** **4-pg. analysis of fieldwork essay due today**
Bring *all* materials so far to class, including an outline for long paper.
- Week 10**
- T, 10/28** In-class drafting of long essay, meet in FLB G27
- R, 10/30** Checklist for drafts, meet in FLB G27
- Week 11**
- T, 11/4** **Draft copies of long essay due in class for workshop**
- R, 11/6** Workshop, continued
- Week 12** (Individual conferences, no class)
- Week 13**
- T, 11/18** In-class writing. Meet in FLB G27
- R, 11/20** **Final 12-pg. essay due.**
In-class drafting of self-reflective essays. Meet in FLB G27
- Week 14** (No class—Thanksgiving break)
- Week 15 (Turn in self-reflective essay and portfolio when you present)**
- T, 12/2** Class presentations [or EUI conference] based on self-reflective essays
- R, 12/4** Presentations
- Week 16**
- T, 12/9** Presentations

There is no final exam for this class. Go home and see your mother. She's missed you.