

## Research Methods for International Development and Social Change

Instructor: Dr. Ken MacLean  
Course Number: ID132  
Schedule: M, Th 2.50-4.05  
Room: S321

IDCE Room #32  
kmaclean@clarku.edu  
Tel. 508-793-7691  
Office Hours: M, Th 1.00-2.50

*"We can understand, too, that natural species are chosen [as totems] not because they are 'good to eat' but because they are 'good to think'."*

Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* (1963:20)

### Course Description

This course examines the value of ethnographic forms of research and knowledge production, its conceits, as well as its limits. While other genres of research design and methods will be considered, the primary focus will be upon qualitative ones, including participatory techniques developed by field practitioners. Special emphasis will be placed upon cultivating a critical stance towards these methods, the cultural assumptions that underlie them, and the impact relations of power have upon the research process as a whole.

### Course Goals

The overarching goal is not to master a predetermined set of techniques—an impossibility given the setting, time-constraints as well as the diversity of the students' research interests and needs. Rather the central point is to develop the capacity to understand how one's own personal experience, positionality, professional and personal ethics as well as relations of power differently affect our ability to use qualitative research "tools" and research outcomes more generally.

Greater awareness of these issues will help students:

- 1) To develop a research methodology that is context appropriate;
- 2) To gain the intellectual flexibility to make adjustments as necessary in "the field"; and
- 3) To hone the skills needed to critically reflect upon the inter-personal dynamics of the research process during the write up phase of their project.

This course is recommended for undergraduate students planning to carry out ethnographic research, either independently or as part of specifically designated study-abroad programs approved by Clark University.

### Prerequisites

ID 120 (Introduction to Socio-cultural Anthropology) and/or

ID 125 (Tales from the Far Side)

## Course Requirements

- Attendance and Participation (20%)

The format of each class will typically alternate between lectures and structured discussion on the week's topic and a more participatory approach that will emphasize group activities, short presentations, and so on.

Please note:

- 1) This component of your grade depends on *both* your attendance and your active participation in class. For this reason, more than two unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.
- 2) If you miss class it is *your* responsibility to catch up on the material you missed. You should do this by speaking with your classmates or with me during office hours. No email queries on missed materials will be entertained.
- 3) If you are experiencing a medical or personal problem that interferes with your ability to attend class, please contact me during office hours to discuss it.

- Observation Exercise (10%)

Prepare a two-page summary and sketch map of your findings. The exercise involves taking field notes, photographs (optional) of people interacting in a specific social setting (TBA). The summary should describe the physical setting, why it was chosen, patterns of interaction observed, etc. that occurred within the time/space. Each summary should also include 4 interview questions drawn from the field observations (Due: September 28).

- 5-page Interview Assignment (10%)

Prepare a critique of the article below in terms of the author's theoretical and methodological choices using one's own knowledge and experience (if relevant), five additional interviews (with one's peers, three of whom should not be known to you) and course readings. The critique should synthesize *all* three of these elements (Due October 19).

Merten, Don. 1996. "Burnout as Cheerleader: The Cultural Basis for Prestige and Privilege in Junior High School." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 27(1): 51-70.

- Literature Review (20%)

The purpose of a literature review is to convey to your reader what knowledge and ideas exist around a particular topic as well as their respective strengths and weaknesses. It is not a descriptive list of what is available or a set of summaries, but a focused piece of writing that is organized around a guiding concept (e.g. your research objective, thesis, etc.). By writing a review you:

- 1) Increase your knowledge of a topic;
- 2) Improve your ability to identify useful articles and books and to obtain them from the library and online sources;
- 3) Develop your critical thinking and writing skills by identifying bias, gaps in the literature, trends, common themes, etc.

Students will be required to complete a 5-page review, ideally on a research method or a topic relevant to your final project (Due November 15).

All reviews should:

- 1) Be organized around and related directly to the research question you are developing;
- 2) Synthesize results into a summary of what is and what is not known;
- 3) Identify areas of controversy;
- 4) Formulate questions that need further research.

- 5-page Movie Assignment (10%)

Prepare a concise review of the movie: either *Cannibal Tours* or *Sacrifice* (TBA)

The review should examine the assumptions, biases, and other factors shaping how the participants view one another and the representational strategies employed by the director to convey these interactions to us (Due December 7).

- Final Synthesis: Research/Grant Proposal (30%)

Students are required to prepare a research/grant proposal on a topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor. A template will be provided by the instructor later in the semester for use by students (Due December 18).

Students who hope to carry out a field-based research project will be encouraged to prepare a real grant proposal that can be submitted to funding bodies at Clark or elsewhere. In addition, the students will complete all the necessary materials for submission to Clark University's Institutional Review Board.

## Summary of Assignments

Assignment	Percent of Grade (%)	Date Due
Attendance & Participation	20	Regular
Observation Exercise	10	September 28
5 Page Interview Exercise	10	October 19
5 Page Literature Review	20	November 15
5 Page Movie Analysis	10	December 7
Research/Grant Proposal	30	December 18

### Additional Notes

- Plagiarism will not be tolerated and students are expected at all times to abide by the terms of Clark University's Academic Integrity Statement, a copy of which is available at: <http://www.clarku.edu/offices/aac/integrity.cfm>.
- Qualified students with disabilities are requested to speak with the instructor by the end of week 2 regarding the accommodation(s) needed.
- Hard copies of all assignments are required by 4 p.m. on the date due. They should include your name, student ID number, be printed in black ink, stapled, and include page numbers.
- Late assignments will be penalized unless there is prior permission. No extensions will be granted for technological reasons. For this reason, students should *always* keep one or more backups of all assignments.
- Lastly, the syllabus is a working class schedule and is *subject to change* at the instructor's discretion.

### Required Texts:

Le Compte, Margaret, and Jean Schensul, *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research, Vol. 1* (London: Altamira Press, 1999).

Schensul, Stephen, and Jean Schensul, Margaret Le Compte, *Essential Ethnographic Methods, Vol. 2* (London: Altamira Press, 1999).

A copy of each text will be placed on reserve at the Goddard library. However, students are urged to purchase either new or used copies from the bookstore or online vendors.

### Articles:

Photocopied articles are in a course-pack [CP], available for purchase at Curry Printing. All other articles are available electronically via blackboard at: <insert URL>.

## **Week 1 Introduction**

8/27 *Course Overview*

*Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*, pp. 1-39.  
*Essential Ethnographic Methods*, pp. 91-120.

8/30 *The Place of Ethnography*

Cohn, Bernard, "Introduction." In *Colonialism and Its Form of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 3-15. [CP]  
Malinowski, Bronislaw. "Introduction: Subject, Method, and Scope of Inquiry," and "The Meaning of the Kula." In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (London: Routledge and Sons, 1931), pp. 1-25. [CP]

## **Week 2 Modes of Knowing**

9/03 No Class (Labor Day)

9/06 *What is a Fact?*

Evans-Pritchard, E.E., "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events." In *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976 [1937]), pp. 63-83. [CP]

Geertz, Clifford, "Thick Description: Towards and Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 3-30. [CP]  
*Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*, 41-59.

➤ In Class Exercise: Handout & Discussion

## **Week 3**

9/10 *Language and Categorical Thought*

Douglas, Mary, "The Abominations of Leviticus." In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Boston: Ark Paperbacks, 1966), pp. 41-57. [CP]

Evans-Pritchard EE, "Interest in Cattle." In *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 15-50.

➤ In Class Exercise: How Categories Shape and Limit Research (Handout & Discussion)

9/13 *Being There*

- Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson (eds.), "Discipline and Practice: The 'Field' as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology." In *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 1-46. [CP]
- Marcus, George, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 1995 (23): 95-117.

#### **Week 4      Research Proposals**

9/17    *Defining a Research Problem*

*Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*, 61-126.  
*Essential Ethnographic Methods*, 9-47.

9/20    *Writing a Grant Proposal*

Prezowski, Adam, and Frank Solomon. "The Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions" available at <http://www.pitt.edu/~offres/proposal/propwriting/websites.html>

National Science Foundation. *A Guide for Proposal Writing* available at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04016/nsf04016.pdf>

"How to do a Literature Review," available at <http://www.library.ncat.edu/ref/guides/literaturereview03.htm>

- In Class Exercise: Small groups will pose as research grant committees and evaluate anonymous proposals using heuristic provided in advance by the instructor.

#### **Week 5      Ethics**

9/24    *Before you leave*

Le Compte and Schensul, *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*, 183-204.

Thorne, Barrie, "'You Still Takin' Notes?' Fieldwork and the Problems of Informed Consent" *Social Problems* 1980 (27): 284-297.

Clark University Office of Sponsored Programs and Research  
<http://www.clarku.edu/offices/research/>

9/27    *Confronting Difference*

Abu-Lughod, Lila, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 2002 104(3): 783-790.

Bell, Kirsten, "Genital Cutting and Western Discourses on Sexuality." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 2005 19(2): 125-148.

## **Week 6      Talking to Others**

10/1 *Making Sense of Silences*

Stoler, Ann with Karen Strassler, "Castings for the Colonial: Memory Work in 'New Order' Java." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 2000 42(1).

10/4 Interviews (in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured) & Surveys

*Essential Ethnographic Methods*, 121-197

## **Week 7**

10/8 Fall Break (No Class)

10/11 *Practice Interviews*

Class Exercise A: Rotation role play, groups of 3 (Interviewer/Interviewee/Observer),  
Topic TBA

## **Week 8**

10/15 Focus Groups

Iowa State University, "Focus Group Fundamentals (Methodology Brief," (2004).

10/18 *Seeing Things as They Are?*

Geertz, Clifford. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." In *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 412-453. [CP]

Fabian, Johannes. 1995. "Ethnographic Misunderstanding and the Perils of Context." *American Anthropologist* 97(1): 41-50.

## **Week 9      Quantitative Data**

10/22 *Making Populations*

Urla, Jacqueline. 1993. "Cultural Politics in an Age of Statistics: Numbers, Nations, and the Making of Basque Identity" *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 20, No. 4., pp. 818-843.

Recommended:

Madrigal, Lorena, *Statistics for Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).  
Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2002. "Demography without Numbers." In *Anthropology Demography*, eds. David Ketzer and Tom Fricke. Chicago: Chicago University Press, pp. 201-222.

10/25 *Enumerating Values*

*Essential Ethnographic Methods*, 231-290.

- In Class Exercise: Groups evaluate selected publication(s) prepared by the World Values Surveys available at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/> (Topic TBA)

## **Week 10 Working with Memory**

10/29 *History, Memory and Counter-Memory*

Kleinman, Arthur, and Joan Kleinman, "How Bodies Remember: Social Memory and Bodily Experience of Criticism, Resistance, and Delegation following China's Cultural Revolution." *New Literary History* 1994 25(3): 707-723.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph, "The Power in the Story." In *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), pp. 1-30. [CP]

11/1 *Doing Oral Histories*

Texas Historical Commission, "Fundamentals of Oral History (Texas Preservation Guidelines, 2004)"

- In Class Exercise: "Where were you on 9/11?" (Making sense of mediated events)

## **Week 11 The Personal and the Political**

11/5 *Surviving Fieldwork*

Evans-Pritchard, E.E., "Introduction." In *The Nuer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968 [1940]), pp. 7-15. [CP]

Appadurai, Arjun, "Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia," *American Ethnologist* 1981 8(3): 5-21.  
Stoller, Paul, "Ethnographies as Texts/Ethnographers as Griots," *American Ethnologist* 1994 21(2): 353-366.

11/08 *Upon Return: Reverse Culture Shock and Write-Up Dilemmas*

*Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*, pp. 147-160.

Naryan, Kirin, "How Native is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 1993 95(3): 671-686.

Warren, D.M., "Cross-Cultural Interactions: The Transition and Reentry Process," *Anthropology & Humanism Quarterly* 1981 6(1): 20-25.

## **Week 12      Relations of Power**

11/12 *Studying Up/Down/Around Difference*

Priyadharshini, Esther. 2003. "Coming Unstuck: Think Otherwise About Studying Up." 34(4): 420-437.

Haraway, Donna. 1991. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*. London: Routledge, pp. 183-202.

- In Class Exercise: TBA

11/15 *Emotion*

Abu-Lughod, Lila, "Honor and the Sentiments of Loss in a Bedouin Society," *American Ethnologist* 1985 12(2): 245-261.

Rosaldo, Renato. "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage." In *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-21. [CP]

- In Class Exercise: Making Sense of Metaphor (TBA)

## **Week 13      Ethnographic Writing**

11/19 *Point-of-View*

Geertz, Clifford, "'From the Native's Point of View': On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding." In *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), pp. 55-72. [CP]

Appadurai, Arjun. "Theory in Anthropology: Center and Periphery." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 1986 (28): 356-361

11/22 Thanksgiving Recess (No class)

## Week 14

11/26 *False Appearances*

Ferguson, James. 1985. "The Bovine Mystique: Power, Property, and Livestock in Rural Lesotho." *Man* 20: 647-74.

Kirsch, Stuart. 1997. "Lost Tribes: Indigenous People and the Social Imaginary." *Anthropological Quarterly* 70(2): 58-67.

11/29 Film Screening + Writing Assignment (Instructor at AAA meetings)

Either *Cannibal Tours* or *Sacrifice* (Due: December 6<sup>th</sup>)

## Week 15 Globalization and Multi-Sited Anthropology

12/3 *In Motion*

Appadurai, Arjun, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." *Public Culture* 1990 2(2): 1-24.

- In Class Exercise: Small groups will design framework for multi-sited approach to analyze selected "scapes" and "flows" provided by instructor.

12/6 *Development, Anthropology, and NGOs*

Fisher, William, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 1997 (26): 439-64.

Ferguson, James, "Anthropology and its evil twin: development in the constitution of a discipline," in Marc Edelman and Angelique Haugerud (eds.), *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization: From Classical Political Economy to Contemporary Neoliberalism* (London: Blackwell, 2005), 140-153.

## Week 16 Critiques

12/10 *Development and NGOs*

Escobar Arturo, "Anthropology and the Development Encounter: The Making and Marketing of Development Anthropology," *American Ethnologist* 1991 18(4): 658-82.

Escobar, Arturo, "Imagining a Post-Development Era? Critical Thought, Development, and Social Movements," *Social Text* 1992 31/32: 20-56.