

FLORENCE ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELD SCHOOL
SUMMER 2021

ANTY495 Field Experience: Urban Ethnographic Methods
Dr. Zachary T. Androus, Instructor

University of Montana Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Neyooxet Greymorning

1. Overview

This course teaches ethnographic research methods for undergraduate or graduate students online from Florence, Italy. Students will learn how methodological approaches reflect the principles of humanistic social scientific inquiry, through engaging seminal ethnographic texts and current methodological resources, as well as conducting their own original research in their home communities or in online communities, as appropriate to their local circumstances. The course takes a 'field school' approach, covering both practical and methodological aspects of ethnographic fieldwork, with a special focus on urban environments. Students will learn how to use the core ethnographic techniques of sampling, participant-observation, field notes, interviewing, and how to develop lines of inquiry that build on existing scholarship. Throughout, the course features a particular focus on the urban context, drawing on both the Chicago school of urban ethnography and the interdisciplinary field of contemporary Italian urban studies.

2. Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course students will be able to:

- Draw ethnographic samples in ways that serve the needs of different research goals, while articulating the relationship between methods and outcomes.
- Identify potential ethical issues (including but not limited to informed consent, anonymity, testability, obligations to participants, conflicts of interest, and uses of research findings) and specific methodological strategies to either avoid or resolve them.
- Conduct systematic and effective participant-observation, including writing, transcribing, memoing, and further analyzing field notes.
- Conduct formal and informal, un-, semi, and structured ethnographic interviews, transcribe them, and work analytically with their content.
- Understand the difference between qualitative and quantitative data, which is appropriate for a given research problem, and the methods appropriate to collecting each.

3. Course Schedule

***Online Meetings will be held:**

9:00-11:30am Pacific Time (US West Coast)

12:00-2:30pm Eastern Time (US East Coast)

6:00-8:30pm Central European Time (Italy)

DAY	TOPIC	READ
1. Weds June 30	Thinking Scientifically about Culture and Society Situating Ethnography in the Social Scientific Endeavor: Anthropological Innovators and Their Legacies ONLINE PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING FOR ONSITE STUDENTS	Bernard, Anthropology and the Social Sciences, pp. 1-23 Malinowski, Argonauts of the Western Pacific, pp. 1-25
2. Friday July 2	Introducing Italy: Nation, State, Culture, and Society ONLINE PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING FOR ONSITE STUDENTS	Dickie, Imagined Italies Coluzzi, Regional and Minority Languages Young, The Italian Postcolonial, pp. 31-34
3. Wed July 7	Two different classics on fieldwork: To what extent is Geertz doing what Bernard describes? Experimenting with 'Thick Description'	Geertz, Thick Description, pp. 3-30 Bernard, Participant Observation, pp. 256-290
4. Thurs July 8	Developing a proposal: Choosing topics: what do you want to know? Choosing methods: what's the best way to learn what you want to know? Fieldnotes: what they are, how to write them, how to use them How to build on existing scholarship to create discrete, completable proposals	Bernard: Preparing for Research, pp. 54-81 Bernard: Fieldnotes and Database Management, pp. 291-305 Abidin and de Seta: Confessions on Digital Ethnography, pp. 1-19
5. Mon July 12	Roundtable discussion: Sharing our sources Micro to Macro: How Counihan connects individual experiences to broad trends Spend the next two days trying to incorporate participation into your observation!	*Bring articles relevant to your project* Counihan, Around the Tuscan Table: Food as Voice in 20th Century Florence, pp. 1-15 Conclusion: Molto, Ma Buono?, pp. 176-191 Lewin and Leap: Out in the Field, pp. vii-19

6. Tues July 13	Reminder: Have fieldnotes for the next meeting! Sampling for Ethnography: Identifying informants The primacy of ethics in social research IRBs: Federal Law and University Policy	Bernard, Nonprobability Samples and Choosing Informants, pp. 143-155 American Anthropological Association Statement on Ethics American Sociological Association Code of Ethics Research Proposal Due
7. Wed July 14	Introducing critical perspectives on our topics Fieldnotes Review	Thomas, Doing Critical Ethnography, pp. 1-31 Bring fieldnotes to class to review together
8. Thur July 15	The city as ethnographic object Park's grand agenda for urban research	Savage et al, pp. 1-35 Park, The City, pp. 577-612
9. Mon July 19	Interviewing in theory and practice Interviewing activity	Bernard, Interviewing I: Unstructured and Semi-Structured, pp. 156-186 Part.-Obs. and Fieldnotes Graded
10. Tues July 20	Ethnographic Revolutions of the Late 20 th Century: Textuality and the Feminist Response Work on interviewing over the next two days	Clifford, Partial Truths, pp. 1-26 Behar, Out of Exile, pp. 1-29
11. Wed July 21	Reading the Methods in Contemporary (Urban?) Ethnographies: Has Counihan applied the critiques of Textuality and the Feminist Response, or is hers the kind of ethnography that is the object of those critiques? Evaluating our interviews, working on our transcriptions.	Counihan, Around the Tuscan Table: Food as Voice in Twentieth Century Florence, pp. 1-15 Food Production, Reproduction, and Gender, pp. 79-95 Bernard, Text Analysis I, pp. 407-428

<p>12. Thur July 22</p>	<p>Working with our interviews and transcriptions in more depth: extracting and analyzing the data</p> <p>Data analysis activity: coding one another's transcripts</p>	<p>Bernard, Text Analysis II, pp. 429-457</p> <p>Have transcripts for class meeting</p> <p>Data Collection Graded</p>
<p>13. Mon July 26</p>	<p>Framing our data for write-up: in which of the different types of Low's cities does your data occur?</p> <p>Activity: analysis in practice, or writing up your data.</p>	<p>Low, Theorizing the City, pp. 1-33</p> <p>Have all your fieldnotes, transcriptions, coding, memoing, etc. for class</p>
<p>14. Tues July 27</p>	<p>What does Law tell you about your project? How are you accounting for the 'messiness' of your data and your analysis?</p> <p>Activity: Be prepared to share your draft write-up and we'll experiment together with alternative ways to represent your findings.</p>	<p>Law, After Method: Introduction and Interlude, pp. 1-17 Virtual Singularity, pp. 57-58 Partial Connections, pp. 62-65 Elusive Objects and Interlude, pp. 86-103</p> <p>Jobson, Letting Anthropology Burn, pp. 259-271</p>
<p>15. Wed July 28</p>	<p>Krause's critique (and its implication for our writing up): it takes more than quotes from people to make a work ethnographic.</p> <p>Contemporary Italian ethnography: critical readings with an eye towards methods.</p>	<p>Krause, Towards an Ethnographic Research Agenda for Italy, pp. 393-403</p> <p>Belmonte, The Broken Fountain: Chapter One, Paean to the City, pp. 1-8 Chapter Two, Fieldwork in Naples, pp. 9-26</p> <p>Data Analysis Graded</p>
<p>16. Thurs July 29</p>	<p>Recent ethnographic attempts to account for mess (in Law's sense, if not with Law's methods)</p> <p>Final considerations for your data collection, analysis, and write-up</p>	<p>Pine, Art of Making Do in Naples: Introduction, The Contact Zone, pp. 1-18 Making Do With Art, pp.61-130 Epilogue, Making Do with Indeterminacy, pp. 295-304</p>
<p>FINAL WRITE-UPS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY AUGUST 6</p>		

4. Forms of Assessment

The course is organized around the completion of an ethnographic project. The components of the project are divided into specific, objective criteria of progress against which the students' accomplishments will be measured. The forms of assessment are as follows:

Participant-Observation and Fieldnotes: 15% of final grade

At the beginning of the class students learn to take fieldnotes through a combination of theory provided by the assigned readings, and practice carried out during their time onsite. Fieldnotes will be assessed twice during the course on the basis of quantity and frequency (they must be recorded on a daily basis), and the extent to which they conform to the theory covered in the Bernard and Geertz readings.

Research Proposal: 15% of final grade

The research proposal of five to seven pages must include an explanation of the data sought, how it builds on existing scholarship (with references cited), the specific choice of methods based on the type of data sought, and how any potential ethical concerns will be addressed. The criteria for assessment include the extent to which the proposed research is situated in the existing scholarship, the appropriateness of the methods chosen based on the Bernard readings, and the extent to which the ethical standards of the AAA and the ASA are reflected in the research plan.

Data Collection: 20% of final grade

This requires extracting data from fieldnotes and conducting at least four formal, semi-structured interviews, and their transcription and memoing. The criteria for assessment include the content of the interview as developed by the interviewer, and the extent to which their transcription and memoing reflects the procedures outlined in the Bernard reading and reflected in the Counihan and Low readings.

Data Analysis: 20% of final grade

This requires processing the extracted data using the methods outlined in the Bernard and Law readings. Criteria for assessment include the extent and the accuracy of the coding, and the extent to which the procedures specified by Bernard and Law are followed (the specifics will vary based on the topic; the suitability of the chosen methods is assessed as part of the Research Proposal).

Final Project Write-Up: 30% of final grade

The final project write-up should be modelled on the ethnographic texts about Italy that we have read over the course: Coluzzi, Counihan, Belmonte, and Pine are all examples, as are sources specifically relevant to your topic, insofar as these sources are *ethnographic* as discussed by Krauss. Similarly, your writing must itself be ethnographic in the sense discussed by Geertz, Clifford, and Behar and it must engage the urban dimension of your fieldsite as discussed by Savage and Park. This is due as a Word document of minimum 15 pages in length, due the week following the conclusion of the course meetings onsite.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Compliance

In accordance with the University of Montana’s IRB policies, student projects must involve minimal risk to participants and will be approved by the instructor before any contact with participants takes place. The following criteria offer a guideline, but the final oversight and approval will be at the discretion of the instructor in consultation with the IRB. Projects involving sensitive topics (sexual conduct; substance use and/or abuse including, but not limited to alcohol; mental health; traumatic experiences of an individual, including war or combat experiences of veterans) or vulnerable populations (pregnant women, children, mentally disabled, prisoners, or individuals at risk of incarceration or deportation) will not be approved for this class.

5. GRADING

The final course grade is calculated as a cumulative percentage based on the proportional weights indicated above for each form of assessment. Traditional letter grades are assigned based on the following percentages:

A	100-94%	Excellent: student work demonstrates a thorough understanding of the course content and makes independent connections to other relevant material, based on student research into other sources as well as original insights developed from close engagement with assigned course material, with all assigned work completed on time.
A-	93-90%	
B+	89-87%	Good: student work demonstrates a thorough understanding of course content based on material covered in the syllabus, with original insights derived from close engagement with assigned course material, with all assigned work completed on time.
B	86-83%	
B-	82-80%	
C+	79-77%	Satisfactory: student work demonstrates a reasonable understanding of course content based on material covered in the syllabus, with all assigned work completed.
C	76-73%	
C-	72-70%	
D	69-65%	Poor: student work demonstrates a basic, but incomplete, understanding of course content based on material covered in the syllabus. Assigned work incomplete and/or unsatisfactory.
F	< 64%	Failure: student work shows an unsatisfactorily incomplete understanding of course content. Assigned work incomplete and/or unsatisfactory.

6. LIST OF COURSE MATERIALS/READINGS

Abidin, Crystal and Gabriele de Seta

2020 Private Messages from the Field: Confessions on Digital Ethnography and Its Discomforts. *Journal of Digital Social Research* 2(1):1-19.

- American Anthropological Association
2012 Statement on Ethics. Available from
<http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>
- American Sociological Association
1999 Code of Ethics and Policies and Procedures of the ASA Committee on Professional Ethics. Available from
<http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/images/asa/docs/pdf/CodeofEthics.pdf>
- Behar, Ruth
1995 Introduction: Out of Exile. In Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon, eds., *Women Writing Culture*, pp. 1-29. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Belmonte, Thomas
2005[1979] *The Broken Fountain Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Edition*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bernard, H. Russell
2011 *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Fifth edition. Lanham: Alta Mira Press.
- Clifford, James
1986 Introduction: Partial Truths. In James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, pp. 1-26. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Coluzzi, Paolo
2009 Endangered Minority and Regional Languages ('Dialects') in Italy. *Modern Italy* 14(1):39-54
- Counihan, Carole M.
2004 *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Florence*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Dickie, John
1996 *Imagined Italies*. In David Forgacs and Robert Lumley, eds., *Italian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, pp. 19-33. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford
1973 *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Jobson, Ryan Cecil
2020 The Case for Letting Anthropology Burn: Sociocultural Anthropology in 2019. *American Anthropologist* 122(2):259-271.
- Krause, Elizabeth L.
2006 'You have to start with something': Towards an ethnographic research agenda for modern Italy. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 11(3):393-403.
- Law, John
2004 *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge.
- Lewin, Ellen and William L. Leap
1996 Preface and Introduction. In Ellen Lewin and William L. Leap, eds., *Out in the Field: Reflections of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists*, pp. vii-30. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Low, Setha M.

- 1999 Introduction: Theorizing the City. In Setha M. Low. ed., *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader*, pp. 1-33. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw
- 1922 *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagos of Melanesian New Guinea*. London: George Routledge and Sons.
Available from <https://archive.org/details/argonautsofthewe032976mbp>
- Park, Robert E.
- 1915 *The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the City Environment*. *The American Journal of Sociology* 20(5):577-612.
- Pine, Jason
- 2012 *The Art of Making Do in Naples*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Savage, Mike, Alan Warde and Kevin Ward
- 2003 *Urban Sociology, Capitalism and Modernity*. 2nd ed. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Thomas, Jim
- 1993 *Doing Critical Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Young, Robert C.J.
- 2012 *The Italian Postcolonial*. In Lombardi-Diop, Cristina and Caterina Romeo, eds., *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*, pp. 31-34. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.