This course introduces students to ethnographic fieldwork by integrating research practice with methodological and theoretical readings. Drawing primarily from anthropology and folklore, topics include identifying a subject of study or a field site, developing appropriate research strategies, initiating fieldwork, establishing rapport, and analyzing reflexivity, representation, ethics, activism, collaboration, and visual, sound and digital technology. Each student will conceptualize and execute a fieldwork project that dovetails with their graduate research in their own discipline.

A goal of this seminar is to understand the complex relationships among epistemology, the production of knowledge, ethnographic methods, and the production of texts. While the course allows students to practice and experiment with a variety of ethnographic techniques, a fundamental focus is on understanding how particular methods are driven by the larger ethical, political, and theoretical frameworks and epistemologies in which they are embedded. We will look at a variety of perspectives, including: understanding meaning, creating “objective” or “subjective” knowledge, decolonizing anthropology, and tackling multi-sited fieldwork. Our discussions will foster critique, debate, and some degree of discomfort as we question some of the traditional tenants of research.

The course introduces students to a variety of techniques in ethnographic fieldwork including oral and life histories, interviewing, focus groups, media and textual analysis, event analysis, as well as participant observation. The basic assumption behind our explorations is that we cannot study “methods” in isolation, but must tie them to particular purposes of knowledge creation, and ethical, and theoretical choices. Finally, the course is also concerned with the kinds of political and personal relationships ethnographers build and maintain with those they work with as well as the political implications of how they work and what they do with the information they gather.

The most important resources in the class are the individual skills, experiences and research agendas of the students. A primary part of the course will be hearing about and learning from each other’s experiences. Two full weeks will be spent on students’ fieldwork presentations, and the remainder of the class is also student-led. The class will be run interactively, with discussion and mutual respect.

I welcome discussion with students during office hours, by appointment, or by email or telephone. I have a comment bag available at every class.

Please turn off cell phones during class.
Plagiarism is not tolerated at the UO. Cases of plagiarism (from other students or published materials) will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.
Course requirements
1. 10% of the grade is based on attendance. Late arrivals and departures will count as an absence.
2. 20% of the grade is based on oral participation. Discussion is the mode of the course. Students are required to pick one date on which to present and lead discussion in class on the issues raised in the readings/films. I will let you know if you are doing a solo or group presentation. Group members need to coordinate their presentations/discussions. Using the Blackboard discussion board (under Tools), students are required to post comments and/or outlines and questions on the readings/films prior to their oral presentations. The deadline is 6 PM of the day previous to the presentation. There are also 2 fieldwork presentations, see below.
3. 40% of the grade is based on 2 installments of an evaluative/interpretive/critical journal on the required readings/films. I suggest that students write a few pages per session, and have them ready before class. These pages can then be re-thought, expanded and/or edited into the journal. Journal guidelines will be mutually developed, see end of syllabus.
   The first written installment is 8 pages, due Feb 6 in class, and covers the readings/films through Feb 1 (18%).
   The second is 10 pages, due March 12 in class, and covers the readings/films through March 7 (22%).

4. Fieldwork Project (30%): Those students who are already engaged in fieldwork-based projects will use their experiences in class and build on them. Those planning ethnographic research will set up a small-scale project in conjunction with the class to facilitate their larger project and practice techniques. Everyone will engage in a series of fieldwork exercises to help them refine and expand their methods for their graduate work.
To accomplish this goal, choose at least 3 of the following ethnographic activities that you feel you need for your graduate work:
- interview
- focus group
- oral or life history
- event observation
- general observation
- participatory learning
- qualitative survey
- textual analysis/archival work
- media analysis
- digital fieldwork
In addition, make sure that one activity takes place in an insider framework and one in an outsider framework. A proposal for your project and a plan for your 3 activities (and how they relate to your larger project) is due Jan. 18 (1 p.). Students are encouraged to meet with me to discuss possible projects/plans. Collaborative projects are welcome.

Each student will write an original paper describing and analyzing their project. This writing is due in 2 installments:
The first paper should include at least 1 activity (ideally 2); 6 pp. due Feb 20 (10%).
The final paper builds on the first; 10 pp. due Wed March 21, 3 PM (20%)
Each student will present and discuss their project/activities twice in class:
Feb 13 and 15: progress reports; March 12 and 14 (and possibly Wed, March 21, 3 PM): final presentations. Please sign up for 2 slots: 1 progress report and 1 final presentation.
Grading Rubric
A – Outstanding performance relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates a mastery of course content at the highest level.
B – Performance that is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates a mastery of course content at a high level.
C – Performance that meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates an adequate understanding of course content.
D – Performance that is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.
F – Performance in the course, for whatever reason, is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of the course content.

Readings/Syllabus
The Blackboard site for this class has the Syllabus which includes the Journal Guide (under Course Information). Readings/films are available on BB under Readings or via the url listed. The UO Bookstore has the following book:
Lassiter, Luke Eric

Course Schedule

1. Jan 9 Introductions. Goals of the course. Thematic issues. Planning ethnographic research. From field to text: methods and writing. What is ethnography? What is your favorite ethnography and why do you like it? What kinds of theoretical and methodological contributions does it make? What is the standpoint of the author? How is the narrative framed? What voices are present in the book and how are they represented? What voices are absent? How are fieldwork methods addressed?

2. Jan. 11 Fieldwork, truths, and objectivity. Epistemology: What is the purpose of ethnographic knowledge? How do we study "culture?" What are the goals of ethnography? How have traditional understandings of research and ethnography been challenged? How can we handle the issue of representation? What happens when the subjects speak back?


Jan 16 MLK
3. **Jan 18** Methods of participant observation; entering the field; what is “the field” in the 21st century? What are the challenges of multi-sited ethnography? **Project proposal due.**


4. **Jan 23** Interviews: variations and techniques; focus groups; ethnographic conversations; life histories.


5. **Jan 25** Guest presentation on Hooks, Yarns, and Bars: Folk Arts Programming in an Oregon Prison by Emily Afanador (MA Folklore) and Lyle Murphy (MA Folklore student).

6. **Jan 30** Ethnographic authority in the field and text; models and assumptions of pioneering ethnographers. How is the author represented in the text? What is reflexivity? How do we write notes? How do field notes become texts?


7. Feb. 1 Visual, sound, and digital ethnography. How does incorporating visual elements, sound, and movement into ethnography permit different kinds of stories telling? How do we represent multivocality, dissent, and difference in digital and visual ethnography? How is digital ethnography alike and different from film-making? What kinds of permissions do you need?

An Anthropological Approach to YouTube by Michael Wesch and the Digital Ethnography Working Group
http://mediatedcultures.net/mediatedculture.htm or http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPAO-lZ4_hU&feature=player_embedded#at=15 (55 minutes)


Manches Research: Ethnographic Research for Insight and Innovation
http://www.manchesresearch.co.uk/video%20ethnography.html

Making Rights a Reality: The Oaxaca Social Movement 2006 – present
http://www.mraroaxaca.uoregon.edu

Website for Silverman, Carol

8. Feb. 6 Collaborative Ethnography. **Journals due**


9. Feb 8. Ethnography and colonialism. What is the relationship between anthropology (and other kinds of research) and colonialism? How have traditional forms of western knowledge production subordinated indigenous peoples? What is an indigenous research agenda? What kinds of projects are useful to indigenous peoples? How can we engage in ethical, collaborative research in indigenous communities?


10. Feb 13. Fieldwork project progress reports

11. Feb 15. Fieldwork project progress reports
12. Feb 20. Feminist ethnography. What have feminists contributed to ethnography? Are there “feminist” methods? What does it mean to study gender and write a gendered ethnography? What is feminist ethnography? **Fieldwork project: first written installment due.**


Lawless, Elaine J. 1992. "I was afraid someone like you... an outsider... would misunderstand": Negotiating Interpretive Differences between Ethnographers and Subjects. *Journal of American Folklore* 105:302-14.

13. Feb 22. Gender, sexuality, the self, and textual responses. Whose voice?


14. Feb 27. Conflicting points of view. What happens when subjects speak back? From whose side do you tell a story? What is truth? What is fact?


16. March 5. Institutional Review Boards (IRBs): current controversies. UO researchers must pass the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) test required for Human Subjects

American Anthropological Association:


American Folklore Society Comments on Proposed Changes to the Common Rule (Oct 2011) http://www.afsnet.org/?page=HumanSubjects


17. March 7. Activist research; participatory research. Whose agenda? What is the relationship between collaboration and activism?


19. March 14. Final project presentations

Final fieldwork projects due Wed. March 21, 3 PM in 321 Condon.

Upcoming lectures:
Lawrence Bobo (Harvard University), “Postracial Dreams, American Realities: Does the Color Line Endure?” Thursday January 19, 7PM, Ford Alumni Center
Bernice Reagon (historian and founder, Sweet Honey in the Rock), Thurs. Feb.16, Beall Hall
Journal Guide (draft)

Points will be deducted for late papers and for papers exceeding the double-spaced page limit. No folders, please: 1" margins, 12 pt font, one staple in left hand corner. You are encouraged to group articles and emphasize theoretical themes, and analytical contrasts and similarities. You may omit 1-2 articles/films at most. If you cite relevant authors in the required readings, just cite the page number.

1. What are the author's main objectives, goals and agendas?

2. What is the context for the writing of this article/making of this film? To what body of writings or issues or theory does the article relate?

3. What are the major findings?

4. Do you agree with the arguments? why? why not?

5. How does the article relate to the issues and theoretical debates previously discussed in class? You may also bring in readings from outside the class, and of course, your own experiences.

6. How do you evaluate the article/film? What questions does it raise for you?