ETHN 197. Fieldwork in Racial and Ethnic Communities:
Case Study in Visual Ethnography: The AjA Project

Fall 2006

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Course Overview:
This course will introduce participants to the use of visual elements, mainly photographs, in the process of ethnography and cultural storytelling. Participants will have the opportunity to observe and reflect upon the participatory methodology of The AjA Project, a local nonprofit that teaches refugee and immigrant children to employ photography in telling stories about their culture, identity, experiences of displacement, and their acculturation process in the United States.

Course Requirements:
1) Course participants will work individually with Cajon Valley Middle School students enrolled in The AjA Project’s after school participatory photography program, which consists of refugees and immigrants from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mexico. Participants will be assigned student partners, and will serve as mentors and collaborators for these students as they learn about the power of photography in self-expression and storytelling. Participants will have a unique opportunity to interact, support and collaborate with these students as they explore their cultural identity and experiences of displacement using photography.

Note: Students need to be able to attend The AjA Project’s classes at Cajon Valley Middle School in El Cajon, 3.45-4.30 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays.

2) Attendance at weekly seminar meetings on UCSD campus (Tues. 12:30-1:50). Seminar meetings will provide background on refugee experiences and the use of photography in documenting these experiences, and will provide a forum for discussion, debate and reflection of their experiences from The AJA Project.

3) Final Project:
Final visual ethnography project that will be collaboratively produced with the middle school students.
Week 1—Introduction and Orientation

9/25 – 3:45-4:30 – Social Science Building 103
Orientation – Logistics of the course

9/26 – 12:30-1:20 –
Mental Health Workshop: Working with refugee populations

Readings:
Lustig, Kia-Keating & etc. Review of Child and Adolescent Refugee Mental Health.
*Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 43:1 January 2004


9/27 – 3:45-4:30 – Social Science Building 103
Methodology of Visual Ethnography – Part I

Readings:


Ewald, Wendy & Lighfoot, Alexandria. *I Wanna Take Me a Picture*. (PP.16-27)
Beacon Press, 2001


Week 2 – Working with Refugee Communities

10/2 – 3:45-4:30 – Cajon Valley Middle School

10/3—12:30-1:20 – Methodology of Visual Ethnography – Part II

Readings:

McKnight, Lynn. “Whose Agenda is it anyway? Documentary Burdens Community Benefits” *Community Arts Network,*
http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2003/08/whose_agenda_is.php


10/4 – 3:45-4:30 – Cajon Valley Middle School

**Week 3 – Working with Refugee Communities in San Diego**

10/9 – 3:45-4:30 – Cajon Valley Middle School  
10/10 – 12:30 – 1:20 – Refugee Communities in San Diego  
10/11 – 3:45-4:30 – Cajon Valley Middle School

**Weeks 4, 5 & 6 – Examples of Refugee Research**

10/17:  

10/24:


10/31


**Weeks 7 & 8 – Students’ presentations/reflections**

**Weeks 9 & 10 – Preparing for the exhibit**

**Finals week – Exhibit, Thurgood Marshall College, TBD**