The purpose of this course is to understand the construction of “the ethnographic,” how and why it has changed since its inception, and to provide the basic tools to actually begin doing ethnography. We will review (albeit briefly) the conceptual and methodological foundations of ethnography, and critically assess fieldwork, participant observation, the ethnographic interview, and the writing of fieldnotes. The course readings provide both foundation for discussion and planning, as well as templates for practicing ethnography. We will assess the multiple venues in which ethnography is conducted, the variation in basic methods and the role/position of the ethnographer. In addition to considering the epistemological significance of insider/native researchers, a principle theme of the course is the conceptual and theoretical foundation of ethnography as an organizing framework in representing “community” perceptions, collaborative and activist research. This will help us consider the ethics of conducting ethnography.

Classes will consist of both assigned readings as well as practical tasks (such as defining and justifying a field site). Each of you will be required to build an inventory of ethnographic tools from readings that we will explore in class meeting that in addition to standard ethnographic tasks are especially pertinent to your own research. In addition to class readings, as the quarter progresses we will identify key concepts/methods that the class deems important for further discussion and exploration. The key here is flexibility.

The primary goals are to alert you to the value of conducting ethnography as both a conceptual and epistemological tool, how ethnography provides interpretive and explanatory power and how to construct a methodological framework for your own research.

In addition to class meetings three and possibly four community field visits will be scheduled:
(1) Barrio Logan Development Plan Meeting (April 8/May 8)
(2) Chicano Park Day (April 25)
(3) City Heights Medical Center (May TBA)
(4) TBA
Specific assignments for each of these field site visits are described below.

Assignments:

1. A field journal of class activities:
In addition to the readings listed below, each participant is required to begin and keep a daily “fieldnote” journal. The journal should be a record of your experience in class and a reflection of your readings, questions and identification of ethnographic tools and concepts. You will be expected to conduct and write-up class and research observations, as well as ongoing thoughts
about your own research. This should be an informal and personal record of your experience in this class. (to be turned in at the end of class).

2. **Assigned Readings and accompanying reports.**
   For each assigned reading you are required to write a two page review that queries methods, concepts, and questions. Utilize the readings to explore your own ideas and research plans.

3. **Field Visit descriptions**
   For each “field” visit, you will be expected to write up your observations and impressions. Class discussions will follow each visit and will be based on your experience on site.

4. The final assignment is a **research outline of a possible ethnographic project** (about 5 pages). This will be an ongoing task throughout the quarter. The outline should focus on your ongoing research interest and include: a) a brief abstract of the work to be done b) an ethnographic site with justification of choice c) initial areas of participant observation d) an interview guide for open-ended interviews.

**April 1: Introduction:**
1. Overview of course structure and readings.
2. Why and what is Ethnography? Methodology, Query and Analysis.
3. Working Description of each participant’s interest in Ethnography.
   - What is your specific project interest?
     - How do you think you will conduct the research
     - what time frame are you considering?
     - where will the research take place and why
     - how does your own role and person enter into the research?
     - how does this project advance knowledge and build on the literature
     - what is the practical significance of your project?

**April 8: Collaboration, ethics, and social activism**
Ethnography and Social Activism: a working ethic
Reading Assignment: Engaging Contradictions: 1-265.
Class response/review paper: write a two page paper outlining the basic tenents of conducting activist research. Why is it important to do systematic research? What principal concepts do you believe apply (or not) to your own possible ethnography and why? Which article(s) appeal to your own work? Why? What does this tell you about ethnography? What questions does this raise?

**Community Meeting: Barrio Logan Development Plan**

**Method and Concept**
**April 15: The History of Fieldwork and the “invention” of ethnography.**
Class response/review paper: What are the principal conceptual frameworks addressed in this reading? How has ethnographic fieldwork and purpose changed since the time of the early
anthropologists? How has it remained the same? Why is it important to understand these beginnings?

2. the Barrio Logan Community Meeting
   - individual reports and insights; collaborative report—what do we all agree on?
   - how would you proceed to identify a research theme/problem?
   - How would explore and investigate this theme/ problem?

3. How does this inform your own project? What aspects of the class discussion are especially relevant or irrelevant to your own project design? What is new that you have not thought of?

April 22 —
1. Where is “the Field”: doing ethnography in the global age.
   Reading assignment: Gupta and Ferguson: Anthropological Locations (entire text except for Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Two to three page report on the readings

2. What is participant observation?

April 25- Chicano Park Day—Participant Observation

April 29 Participant Observation
Reading assignment: “Thick description”: Geertz
1. Chicano Park Day- Description of Event
   Ethnographic Focus—one event, booth, individual,
   Time, thick description, portrayal
   Note: problem of representation, position, context

2. Reporting on Participant Observation- how would you proceed?

May 6 - Fieldnotes
1. Reading assignment: Sanjek pp. Xi-71; 139-290;371-418.
   - 2 -3 page reading report.
   How does this help your own writing? Your own journal?

2. Rethinking your ethnographic site: a research focus
   - Come prepared with notes on your own site and how to this point in the class you are rethinking the methodology and why.

(May 8? Barrio Logan Development Meeting)

May 13- the Ethnographic Interview
1. Reading Assignment: Learning how to Ask. Charles Briggs
   2-3 page review with focus on how this affects your own work.

2. Constructing and conducting ethnographic interviews
   ethnographic interviews—from generalities to focused questions.

May 20- City Heights Tour-

Context: What is the social context of this project?
Conversations with project personnel (find out what they do, what the project is about).
-record your information, profiles of individuals, what you saw.
-How would you construct an ethnographic project from this visit?

**May 27 – The ethnographic text:**
1. Reading assignment: *Black Rhythms of Peru*
   Written assignment: two page review
2. Report on city Heights—
   -How would you proceed? Which project/theme/idea would you explore? What did you find out and what type of method would you plan to query the project?

**June 3 - The Ethnographic Text**
1. Reading Assignment: *HomeFront*
   written assignment: two page review.

**June 10**
Report on final outlines.

**Bibliography of Required Texts:**

Briggs, Charles

Feldman, Heidi

Gupta, Akil and James Ferguson

Hale, Charles R.

Lutz, Catherine A.

Sanjek, Roger

Stocking, George W. Jr.

* purchase these through Amazon as used copies.

**Recommended:**

**Ethnographies**
Bobrow-Strain
Costa Vargas, Joao H.
2006 Catching Hell in the City of Angels. University of Minnesota: Minneapolis
Gregory, Steven
2007 The Devil Behind the Mirror. Globalization and Politics in the Dominican Republic
Speed, Shannon
University Press: Stanford
Zavella, Patricia

**Methodology Texts**

Bernard, Russell H.
Robben, Antonius C.G.M. and Jeffrey A. Sluka