

Ethnographic Fieldwork in Racial and Ethnic Communities

ETHN 107/USP 130

Spring 2006, TTh 3:00-4:20 PM, SSB 102

Professor Lan T. Pho

Ethnic Studies Department, Room SSB 231

Office Hours: TTh 10:30 AM to Noon

Phone: TBA

Email: TBA

(The professor reserves the right to modify the syllabus during the quarter.)

Course Description

Ethnographic field research involves the study of group of people as about their every day life. Carrying out such research involves two distinct activities. First, the ethnographer enters into a social setting and gets to know the people involved in it; usually the setting is not previously known in an intimate way. Second, the ethnographer writes down in regular, systematic way what she observes and learns while participating in the daily rounds of life of others. Thus the researcher creates an accumulating written record of these observations and experience.¹ This course will examine theories and methods of ethnographic studies and provide guidance to do hands-on fieldwork exercises that will take place in diverse racial and ethnic communities in San Diego and its vicinity.

Required Textbooks and Reader

Textbooks: available from Groundwork Bookstore: 858.452.9625

1. "Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis" by Michael Burawoy. University of California Press, 1991.
2. "Structuring Diversity: Ethnographic Perspectives on the New Immigration" by Louise Lamphere. University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Course Reader Packet: available from University Readers

<http://www.universityreaders.com/students>

You can place an order on line at orders@universityreaders.com or call 800.200.3908 x 11 or 858.552.1120 x 11.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Requirements: since the course will emphasize critical, collaborative ethnographic practices, your class attendance and participation in daily discussion is crucial and constituting 20% of your grade. The course will also require intensive reading, writing and critical thinking skills, class discussion in the venue for giving and receiving peer and instructor's feedback. It is important that you keep all assignments and exercises well organized throughout the term so that you can submit them in its entirety as part of your final ethnographic portfolio at the end of the quarter. Late papers and assignments are not acceptable. More than 2 absences will result in a failing grade.

¹ Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing) by Robert M. Emerson. University of Chicago Press, August 15, 1995)

Term Assignments: identify a research topic, conduct a literature search, develop a research question or hypothesis and select an ethnic community for the ethnographic study required by this course. It will include, but not limited to, a summary of the review of the literature, the research question, field observation paper, interview paper and an ethnographic portfolio.

Field observations: Two observations are required, one will be a walkthrough and a mapping of the field site, and the other is a participant observation of an ethnic activity or event that takes place in the selected community. Extensive field notes during the participant observation are required and will be used for class discussion. The final draft of a three-page analysis of the observations that incorporates course readings and lectures and at least two pages of field notes will be due on Thursday, May 11, 2006.

Interview paper: develop an interview protocol/guide or questionnaire (you can use published questions from relevant research projects in addition to your own questions) that addresses the research question or hypothesis. Conduct and tape (with permission and or consensus from the subjects) two interviews with two different individuals from the selected community at two different occasions. A consent form will be available from the instructor. If permission for taping is denied, take detailed notes of the interviews. Each interview should last for at least 30 minutes. Transcribe the taped interviews and review fieldnotes, submit the final draft of a four-page analysis of these interviews that reflect concepts and themes from course readings and lectures, attach the interview protocol and two transcriptions of the most important 10-minutes from each interview. This assignment will be due on Thursday, June 1, 2006.

Ethnographic portfolio: class discussions and professor's comments will provide feedback on the final draft of field observation paper and interview paper. Revise your papers and submit them as part of your ethnographic portfolio. The main component of the portfolio is a five-page ethnography that covers the following components:

- Project description: include the research design, a summary the literature review, the research question and/or hypothesis.
- Site description: provide a basic understanding and history of the selected community or site and the rationale for the selection of the site.
- Findings and implications: organize the field observations and interviews by themes that explore/answer the research question or hypothesis. Explore plausible explanations of the findings.
- Conclusion: briefly restate the implications and significance of the findings and make recommendation for continuing study or future research.

The portfolio is due on the last day of class, Tuesday, June 6, 2006.

Group assignment is an option and should be discussed with and approved by the professor.

Course Evaluation/Grades:

Attendance and Class Discussion:	20%
Final draft of Field Observation Paper	25%
Final draft of Interview Paper	25%
Final Ethnography Portfolio	30%

Academic Honesty: Credit must be given for every direct quotation, paraphrasing or summarizing of other people's work published in books, journal, Internet sites, etc. Plagiarism

or copying are not acceptable and can result in a failure of the course. Chicago, APA, MLA styles for quotations and citations are acceptable.

All submitted papers should be typed, double space with page numbers, use # 12 font size and in good English grammar and spelling.

Transportation for Fieldwork

You are required to secure your own transportation to and from your fieldwork site. A free campus shuttle runs from UCSD to the Hillcrest Medical Center every half hour (:00 and :30) from 6am-6pm. Shuttle 3A goes from Hillcrest through downtown. From downtown, routes 7 and 15 (\$2.25 for city bus) service University Heights, Kensington, Northpark, and City Heights. For more detailed information about public transportation options, contact UCSD Transportation and Parking Services (Rideshare Operations 822-5977).

ADA Statement

Any student with a disability or condition that compromises her ability to complete course requirements should notify the professor during the first week of the course. The professor will take all reasonable efforts to accommodate those needs. If accommodation cannot be found, it is advisable that the student considers another course.

Course Outline

A. INTRODUCTION TO ETHNOGRAPHY

Week 1: Tue. April 4: Class Introduction and Syllabus

Thu. April 6

- Reader: Beach, Richard and Finders, Margaret J. "Students as Ethnographers: Guiding Alternative Research Projects". *The English Journal*, Vol.89, No. 1, Research Revisited (Sep., 1999) Pp. 82-90.
- Ethnography Unbound: Chapter One--Introduction
- Structuring Diversity: Introduction—The Shaping of Diversity

Week 2: Tue. April 11: Class discussion: Students as Ethnographers—Identify research topic, conduct literature search, develop research question or hypothesis and select a field site. Discuss the option of doing group fieldwork.

Thu. April 13

- Ethnography Unbound: Chapter Two—Reconstructing Social Theories
- Structuring Diversity: Chapter 6—The Politics of Diversity in Monterey Park, California

Week 3: Tue. April 18

- Reader: Ong, Aihwa, "Making the Biopolitical Subject: Cambodian Immigrants, Refugee Medicine, and Cultural Citizenship in California" in *Cultural Compass: Ethnographic Explorations of Asian America*. Ed. Martin F. Manalansan IV. Philadelphia: Temple University Press (2000) Pp. 85-112.
- Reader: Stack, Carol B., "Introduction" (Pp. ix-xv) and "The Flats, The Setting, The Research Scene, My Home Base" in *All Our Kin, Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers (1975) Pp. 1-21.

Thu. April 20

- Structuring Diversity: Chapter 1—The Price of a Good Steak
- Structuring Diversity: Chapter 2—On Machines and Bureaucracy

B. COLLECTING DATA

Week 4: Tue. April 25

- Ethnography Unbound: Part 1—New Social Movements, pp.29-80
- Ethnography Unbound: Part 3—New Immigrants, pp133-178

Thu. April 27

- Reader: Vo, Linda Trinh, “Performing Ethnography in Asian American Communities: Beyond the Insider-versus-Outsider Perspective” in *Cultural Compass: Ethnographic Explorations of Asian America*. Ed. Martin F. Manalansan IV. Philadelphia: Temple University Press (2000) Pp. 17-37.
- Reader: Espiritu, Yen Le, “Home Making” in *Home Bound—Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*, Berkeley: University of California Press (2003) Pp. 1-22.

Guest Speakers: TBA

Week 5: Tue. May 2:

- Reader: Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. “Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research” in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1995) Pp. 1-16
- Reader: Abu-Lughod, Lila, “Writing Against Culture” in *Recapturing Anthropology*. Ed. Richard G. Fox. Santa Fe: School of American Research (1994) Pp. 135-162.
- Ethnography Unbound: Appendix—Teaching Participant Observation, pp. 291-300

Thu. May 4: Participant Observations—Fieldwork—NO CLASS MEETING

Week 6: Tue. May 9: Class Discussion of Fieldwork

Thu. May 11: Participant Observations Paper due

- Ethnography Unbound: Part 4—From Classroom to Community, pp, 179-220

C. WRITING ETHNOGRAPHY

Week 7: Tue. May 16

- Structuring Diversity: Chapter 4—Recent Economic Structuring and Evolving Intergroup Relations in Houston
- Structuring Diversity: Chapter 5—Transcending Boundaries and Closing Ranks: How Schools Shape Interrelations

Thu. May 18: Interviews—Class discussion of Interview Questionnaire

Week 8: Tue. May 23: Interview 1—Fieldwork—NO CLASS MEETING

Thu. May 25

- Ethnography Unbound: Chapter 13—The Extended Case Method
- Reader: Pho, Tuyet-Lan, “Family Education and Academic Performance Among Southeast Asian Students” in *Southeast Asian Refugees and Immigrants in the Mill City: Changing Families, Communities, Institutions--Thirty Years Afterward*. Ed. Tuyet-Lan Pho, Jeffrey N. Gerson and Sylvia Cowan. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, (under consideration), pp. 66-83

Week 9: Tue. May 30: Interview 2—Fieldwork—NO CLASS MEETING
Thu. June 1: Interviews Paper due

- Class discussion: Ethnographic Portfolio

Week 10: Tue. June 6: Final Ethnographic Portfolio due

Have a nice summer!

Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD

Many students take an ethnic studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of “interest” yet have no information about the major or minor and don’t realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An ethnic studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, government and politics, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the ethnic studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact Yolanda Escamilla, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor, at 858-534-3277 or yescamilla@ucsd.edu.