

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas**  
**Spring 2017**  
**ANTH 438 – Ethnographic Field Methods**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is an introduction to ethnographic field methods and will introduce students to some of the primary methods for conducting field research in anthropology.

This course is interactive and involves a combination of formal lectures and applied field experience.

This course is not a typical 400-level Anthropology course – it is team taught by five different faculty members, all with extensive experience in ethnographic field methods. While Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ is the professor of record and will be responsible for submitting all of your grades and administering the exams, the lectures and course content will be provided by the following faculty:

**LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE:**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- (1) apply the basic skills for conducting ethnographic fieldwork,
- (2) conduct participant observation,
- (3) record and transcribe conversations, and
- (4) design and conduct interviews and surveys.

**TEXTBOOKS & COURSE MATERIALS:**

- (1) Bernard, H. Russell (2011) *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Fifth Edition). AltaMira Press.
- (2) DeWalt, Kathleen M. and Billie R. DeWalt (2011). *Participant Observation: A guide for fieldworkers* (Second Edition). AltaMira Press
- (3) Audio recording device: a small hand held digital audio recorder (from Amazon, Radio Shack, etc). Your cell phone works perfectly well!

**GRADING:** There will be one midterm exam (20%) and one non-comprehensive final exam (20%). Other assignments include participant observation & fieldnotes (20%), conversation recording & transcription (20%), and interview & write-up (20%). Students are responsible for withdrawing from the class should they decide not to complete it, and if you neglect to officially drop the course, you will be given a failing grade.

Exams (40%):

Questions on exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The material covered in guest lectures (including additional readings) will be on the exams – so please be sure to attend class. Make up tests are not given, unless a doctor's note is obtained.

Participant Observation & Fieldnotes (20%):

For this assignment, you will need to find an individual who agrees to allow you to conduct participant observation. For undergraduate students, you will spend approximately 2 hours of time with this individual and take notes in your fieldwork journal. For graduate students, you will spend approximately 4 hours of time taking notes. Your fieldnotes will then be written up into a description (2-3 pages for undergraduate students and 4-5 pages for graduate students). You must describe what happened and also analyze it to the best of your ability – being sure to include your own reflections on how you fit into the events and whether or not your presence had an impact.

### Conversation Recording & Transcription (20%):

For this assignment, you will need to use an audio recording device (hand held recorder, cell phone, etc). Undergraduate students will record approximately 15 minutes of conversation while you are doing your participant observation exercise. Of this total 15 minutes of conversation time, select a 3-4 minute window in which multiple people are speaking (this can include yourself) to transcribe. You will then create a transcription of these 3-4 minutes using techniques that we will learn in class and software that can be downloaded for free. In addition to your transcription, please include a 200 – 300 word justification of why you chose the format that you selected.

InqScribe transcription freeware will be used for the transcription. It can be downloaded for a FREE 30 day trial here:

<http://www.inqscribe.com/> Please DO NOT download the freeware until we discuss it in class – as the trial only lasts for 30 days.

Weft QDA is a freeware tool that allows students to analyze textual data, including transcriptions, documents, and field notes. It is available free under a public domain license here: <http://www.pressure.to/qda/doc/wefthelp.pdf>

### Interview and Write Up (20%):

For this assignment, you will design and conduct an interview according to the guidelines that we discuss in class. There is no minimum or maximum number of questions, but you should ask enough that you are able to make general analytical statements about your interview. You will turn in a 300-500 word essay with the completed interview. We will be doing an in class interviewing workshop and you will turn in a rough draft of your interview questions before you conduct the final interview.

NOTE: Students do not need IRB approval to conduct participant observations, conversation recordings, and interviews as long as you receive the consent of the individuals, NO DATA is formally collected, and it is all conducted under the auspices of this course.

### ANTH 438 Course Schedule:

Note: subject to change, if necessary

	DATES	TUESDAY	THURSDAY	READINGS
1	Jan 17, 19	Course introduction – Syllabus	Anthropology and the Social Sciences Foundations of Social Research	Bernard CH: 1 & 2
2	Jan 24, 26	Preparing for Research	Research Design	Bernard CH: 3 & 4
3	Jan 30, Feb 2	Sampling Methods #1	Sampling Methods #2	Bernard CH: 5 & 6
4	Feb 7, 9	Direct and Indirect Observation	What is participant observation?	Bernard CH: 14 DeWalt & DeWalt: CH: 1, 2
5	Feb 14, 16	Becoming and Observer – Becoming a Participant	The Costs of Participation: Culture Shock	DeWalt & DeWalt CH: 3,4,5
6	Feb 21, 23	Designing Participant Observation Research	Field Notes and Database Management	Bernard CH: 13 DeWalt & DeWalt CH: 9, Appendix
7	Feb 28, Mar 2	Analyzing Field Notes	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	DeWalt & DeWalt CH: 10
8	Mar 7, 9	Research Ethics	Research Ethics Continued: Havasupai case study	DeWalt & DeWalt CH: 11
9	Mar 14, 16	Guest Lecture: UNLV Office of Human Subjects	Introduction to Transcription WeftQDA Tutorial	Bernard CH: 18
10	Mar 21, 24	Faculty Research Presented	Interviewing: Structured and Unstructured <b>Participant Observation and Field Notes Due</b>	Bernard CH: 8
11	Mar 28, 30	Interviewing: Questionnaires and Surveys	Faculty Research Presented	Bernard CH: 9
12	April 4, 6	Interviewing: Cultural Domains	Faculty Research Presented	Bernard CH: 10
13	Apr 11, 13	Spring Break – No Classes	Spring Break – No Classes	
14	Apr 18, 20	Faculty Research Presented <b>Conversation Transcription Due</b>	Interviewing workshop (for students to practice their questions)	Reading TBA
15	Apr 25, 27	Faculty Research Presented	Ethnographic Research with Vulnerable Populations	Reading TBA
16	May 2, 4	Final Course Wrap-up and Review	NO CLASS – Finish Interview and write up outside of class	No Reading

#### Final Exam:

**Interview write-ups due at final exam**

## University Memos:

**Academic Misconduct**—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the Student Academic Misconduct Policy (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

**Copyright**—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)**—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

**Religious Holidays Policy**—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

**Transparency in Learning and Teaching**—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information: <https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>  
<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>

**Incomplete Grades**—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student's control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving "I" grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

**Tutoring and Coaching**—The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call [702-895-3177](tel:702-895-3177). The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

**UNLV Writing Center**—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

**Rebelmail**—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.

**Final Examinations**—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

**Library:** Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the Subject Librarian is [https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians\\_by\\_subject](https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students' access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>.