

TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY
Spring 2008
LING 481: Anthropological Linguistics - Ethnography (3 sem. hr.)
Course Syllabus

Course Head: Dave Lindsay Room 325 Ext. 3952 Dave.Lindsay@twu.ca
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Time: M/W, 11:40-1:00

Place: CanIL Harvest Centre, 208

Prerequisites: LING 210, ANTH 101, or instructor's consent

REQUIRED TEXT:

Spradley, James P. 1980. *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

OPTIONAL TEXT:

Spradley, James P. 1979. *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces crucial concepts in anthropology and ethnography to linguists. It focuses on cross-cultural communication with an emphasis on participant observation as an effective methodology for such research. Students will collect and analyze data related to topics such as oral traditions, kinship, and social structure. They will be introduced to various tools for ethno-semantic analysis, including analysis of cultural themes and worldview, semantic domain analysis, and taxonomic analysis.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to individually to research a wide variety of social situations and as a result will specifically be able to:

1. appreciate and respect each culture as unique and valuable;
2. formu and execute personal adaptation strategies through identification of and reflection upon cultural norms for diverse cultures
3. ethically elicit, observe, record and describe social data in a culturally sensitive manner through the method of participant observation;
4. organize, manage and perform ethnosemantic analysis of that data in a systematic and sound manner for easy retrieval and academic presentation through the method of the ethnographic research cycle;
5. engage in phenomenological reflection; and
6. write an ethnography of a limited aspect of a cultural situation.

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS:

1. Field Work in Ethnography

Each student will participate (not just observe) in a social situation (cultural venue) for the entire semester. Such participation will be for at least 60 minutes weekly, though students may wish to participate more frequently or for longer periods. Students may work individually in situations, though the best ethnographic work is often done in teams of two or more people in field situations. Proper permission must be obtained from supervisory staff wherever observations and participation is done, and individual permission must be granted for any interviews with members of the community.

2. Data Notebook

Students will be required to keep track of their various observation sessions in a data notebook (part of which can be digital) formatted according to this outline, which includes six separate sections: Raw Notes, Expanded Notes, Thick Descriptions, Ethnographic Analysis, Journal, and Ancillary materials. Students will bring their data notebooks to class for evaluation throughout the semester. The raw notes and journal sections should be taken using a bound notebook of the student's preference. The expanded notes, thick description, and ethnographic analysis sections may be kept in hard copy or in computer files as the student wishes, but when they are brought for evaluation, they must be in printed form and all tasks labeled clearly. Students will collect ancillary materials (maps, charts, brochures, artifacts, pictures, etc.) throughout the semester and hand them in with the final project.

3. Ethnography

Each student will submit a written ethnography, which emically describes the social situation observed and analyzed. Students will also evaluate factors involved in conducting an ethnography, including personal bias and culture, characteristics that are unique to the culture/social situation studied, and data from one's own experience and from sample methodologies in the area of anthropology. This portion of the paper will require students to think critically and reflectively regarding their own experience, to apply their understanding from the field of anthropology, and to predict successful strategies for acting as a member of the community studied.

4. Reading and Reflection

Students are responsible to complete all readings during the week in which they are assigned. Students are strongly encouraged to read ahead to familiarize themselves with lecture content. Not all readings will be discussed in class, as many merely provide pertinent background information to the field of ethnomethodology and will help the student gain a deeper understanding of the current state of the field. Students will maintain a reading journal throughout the semester (~250 words per reading) where they comment on major quotes and/or major ideas gleaned from each work read (Spradley not included), and how they apply or add to their understanding of the field (some personal evaluative comments welcome!).

DETERMINATION OF FINAL GRADE:

The undergraduate level grading scale will be as follows:

Readings and Responses	20%	85-100	A
Ethnographic Projects	60%	75-84	B
Final Ethnography	20%	65-74	C
	100%	55-64	D
		Below 55	F

DUE DATES:

Due dates are adhered to strictly as each assignment/observation task builds on previous materials. The due date for any assignment is non-negotiable after it has passed. Prior to that time, students should initiate any discussions concerning inability to meet deadlines with assignments. Normally extensions for work are granted only for documented medical situations or similar extreme circumstances.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

It is the responsibility of the student to attend all classes. Responsibility in this sense is intended to include participation in class discussions as well as receiving the benefits of class lectures and reports. *The instructor may bar a student from writing the final examination or handing in a final paper where a student has been absent without permission or legitimate cause for more than one-quarter of the classes (Undergraduate Academic Calendar).* It is also the teacher's prerogative to reduce a student's grade for habitual tardiness or absence.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

The University policy outlined in the *Academic Calendar* will be followed in cases of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes such thing as cheating on tests or exams, or plagiarism. **It is the student's responsibility to know and understand what constitutes plagiarism.** In cases of academic dishonesty, if the instructor is convinced that the incident was deliberate, a grade of zero will normally be given for that assignment. In the event of a second deliberate offence, a grade of F will normally be given for the course. Any penalties less severe than these will be at the discretion of the instructors. Following TWU academic policy, all incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported by the instructor via the *Record of Academic Dishonesty* form, which will be sent to the student with copies to the appropriate university and CanIL authorities. This record will be kept confidential, and will remain on file indefinitely in the Academic Vice President's office.

CAMPUS CLOSURE POLICY:

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), CKSR (104.9 FM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard (604-888-7511) and website (<http://www.twu.ca/conditions/>). The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day.

PROPOSED COURSE OUTLINE:

WEEK	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION	READINGS
Week 1 Jan. 9, 16, 18	Unit 1: <u>Ethnomethodology</u>	Introductions and the background to the discipline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley: Part One • 1 Ethnography
Week 2 Jan. 21, 23	Unit 2: <u>Participant Observation</u>	Choosing our projects and understanding our situations. Getting a grasp on ethics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley: Steps 1&2 • Crane: Participant Observation • Ethics article
Week 3 Jan. 28, 30	Unit 3: <u>Ethnographic Records</u>	Recording observations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley: Step 3 • 1 Ethnography • 1 Article
Week 4 Feb. 4, 7	Unit 4: <u>Thick and Thin Descriptions</u>	Learning the art of description.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley: Step 4 • 1 Ethnography • Geertz: Thick Description
Week 5 Feb. 11, 13	Unit 5: <u>Domain Analysis</u>	Learning how to find patterns and similarities in our data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley : Step 5 • 1 Ethnography
Week 6 Feb. 18, 20	Unit 6: <u>Focused Observations</u>	Selecting a focus and ignoring the periphery. Current state of the art – narrative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley : Step 6 • 1 Ethnography • 1 Article
Week 7 Mar. 3, 5	Unit 7: <u>Taxonomic Analysis</u>	Organizing cultural domains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley : Step 7 • 1 Article
Week 8 Mar. 10, 12	Unit 8: <u>The Ethnographic Interview</u>	Learning how to ask the right questions to the right people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley : Step 8 • 1 Ethnography • Sherman-Heyl: Ethnographic Interviewing
Week 9 Mar. 17, 19	Unit 9: <u>Componential Analysis</u>	Recognizing differences amidst similarities – contrastive analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley : Step 9 • 1 Ethnography • 1 Article
Week 10 Mar. 26, 31	Unit 10: <u>Discovering Cultural Themes</u>	Looking for organizing patterns and themes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley : Step 10 • 1 Ethnography • 1 Article
Week 11 Apr. 2	Unit 11: <u>Taking a cultural inventory</u>	Pulling it all together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley : Step 11 • 1 Ethnography • 1 Article
Week 12 Apr. 7, 9	Unit 12: <u>Ethnographic Writing</u>	Moving from etic to emic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spradley : Step 12 • 1 Ethnography
Week 13 Apr. 14		Summary and Review	

NOTE: READINGS TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE END OF THE WEEK