

ANTHROPOLOGY 491.01

Research Methods

Spring 2015

MW 2:00-3:15, ECTR 114

Dr. Hector Qirko

Office Hours: MW 10:30 am-12:00 pm,

TR 10:30-11:00 am and 1:30-2:30 pm, and by appointment.

88 Wentworth, room 105

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Course description: This course explores research methods in (primarily cultural) anthropology by focusing on two of the field's most important methodological approaches: ethnography and cross-cultural comparisons. Through lectures, discussion, in-class exercises, and individualized research project assignments, we will explore:

- basic research concepts, debates, and ethics;
- specific data-collection methods, including observation, interviews, archival reviews, surveys, and secondary (e.g., HRAF) data collection;
- data sampling, coding, and organization;
- qualitative and quantitative analyses; and
- written and oral reporting.

One semester will not afford us the time necessary to master the skills the course introduces. However, you should come away with a good understanding of how to 'think' research in terms of selecting and operationalizing research questions, as well as in identifying the best methods through which to illuminate them. The course will also provide you an opportunity to explore methods in the context of research topics of particular interest to you.

Course materials:

Textbook: Bernard, H. Russell (2011). Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches (5th edition). Altamira Press.

Additional required readings: Available electronically at the course Oaks site, these include a number of journal articles as well as selected chapters from the following texts:

- Angrosino, M. V. (2005). Projects in ethnographic research. Waveland.
- Ember, C. R., and Ember, M. (2009). Cross-cultural research methods (2nd ed.). Altamira.
- Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J., and LeCompte, M. D. (1999). Essential ethnographic methods. Altamira.
- Sunstein, B. S., and Chiseri-Strater, E. (2007). Fieldworking: reading and writing research (3rd ed.). Bedford/St. Martin's.

Please contact me or the Helpdesk (Helpdesk@cofc.edu, 843 953-5457) with any questions regarding access. Any necessary reading or schedule modifications will be announced in class and via email.

Additional materials: Additional online materials are listed in the course schedule by class meeting date, and can be accessed by following links provided later in this document.

Grade scale: A 92-100%; A- 90-91; B+ 88-89; B 82-87; B- 80-81; C+ 78-79; C 72-77; C- 70-71; D+ 68-69; D 62-67; D- 60-61; F 59 or below.

Course structure: Class periods will consist of lectures, discussion of topics and readings, in-class exercises, and student presentations.

Graded work: Course grade will be based on eight homework assignments (75%), two brief research reports (20%), class participation (5%), and extra-credit quizzes (up to 5 course grade points).

Assignments: You will be responsible for eight homework assignments designed to provide you with the opportunity to put class materials to the test in the context of research questions (one ethnographic and one cross-cultural) that you yourself select (see due dates in course schedule below). The assignment topics relate to:

1. identifying research questions, parts A and B (each 5% of course grade)
2. IRB and ethical research (5%)
3. observation (10%)
4. interview/coding (10%)
5. ethnographic data analyses (10%)
6. cross-cultural hypotheses and data searches (10%)
7. entering and coding HRAF data (10%)
8. comparative data analyses (10%)

Assignment guidelines and related resources will be posted on Oaks and discussed in class. While the focus in grading assignments will be on content, you will also be responsible for presentation (including organization, clarity of writing, grammar, and spelling).

Research reports: In addition, you will prepare two written reports (each 10% of course grade) that summarize and discuss your assignment approaches and findings (see due dates in schedule below). Here content and presentation will be equally important in grading. Where relevant, citation and reference style should follow APA guidelines (see <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). More specific guidelines will be discussed in class and posted on Oaks.

Assignment and report drafts may be submitted any time prior to the evening before due dates for content feedback and editorial suggestions.

Class participation: Class attendance, engagement, and participation are essential for success in this course, as much of the material informing course assignments will stem directly from lectures and class discussion and exercises. You are (obviously) expected to attend all classes, and are responsible for all information disseminated in the course. Further, as part of your participation grade, you are responsible for briefly and informally reporting your progress on your projects to the class (on 3/18 and 4/20). If you must miss a class, obtain notes from classmates and feel free to meet with me during office hours or by appointment to discuss them. I will not provide lecture notes, although I will post assignment guides and other course materials on the course Oaks site.

To properly document unavoidable absences, you must complete and turn in the appropriate forms to the Absence Memo Office at 67 George St. (more information and downloadable forms at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/about/services/absence.php>).

Extra-credit quizzes: In order to reward consistent attendance and the timely reading/viewing of course materials, six short extra-credit quizzes will be given at the beginning of selected class periods. Each quiz will be worth 1% of course grade, for a maximum extra credit of 5 course grade points.

Honor code: Violations of the honor code will be taken seriously. If you need reminding, you can find the complete code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>. As plagiarism is a common (and sometimes unintentional) infraction, I recommend that you watch the “You quote it, you note it” tutorial video (http://www.sunywcc.edu/cms/wp-content/uploads/2013/library_files/flash/) and/or read the material from the Purdue Online Writing Lab (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/1/>).

Special needs: If you have a documented disability and have been approved to receive accommodations through SNAP Services (<http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu/>), please feel free to discuss related issues with me at any time during office hours or by appointment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to revision. Assigned readings are noted in brackets, and listed links can be found below course outline.)

1/12	Introduction to course	
1/14	Introduction to research methods	[text chapter 1]
1/19	No Class – Martin Luther King Day	
1/21	variables and operationalization	[text 2]
	[	
1/26	sampling 1	[text 5; Ember 6]
1/28	sampling 2	[text 7]
2/2	developing good research questions	[Ember 2; text 3]
2/4	ethnographic research protocols	[Angrosino 2; Hoey 14] [Assignment 1 due]
2/9	ethics	[links A, B; Fluehr & Lobhan 08]
2/11	observation 1	[Angrosino 4; text 12]
2/16	observation 2	[text 13]
2/18	interviewing 1	[Angrosino 5; text 8] [Assignment 2 due]
2/23	interviewing 2	[text 9]
2/25	archival research	[Sunstein 07; Schensul 9] [Assignment

		3 due]
3/2-4	No Class- Spring Break	
3/9	analyses 1	[text 18]
3/11	analyses 2	[text 19] [Assignment 4 due]
3/16	discussion of issues	[Hammersley 06; Peck 11]
3/18	presentations 1	
3/23	comparative research protocols	[link C] [Assignment 5 due]
3/25	eHRAF basics	[link D]
3/30	coding and entering variables	[Ember 7; text 20]
4/1	analyses 1	[Ember 8; link E] [Assignment 1B due]
4/6	analyses 2	[text 20, 21]
4/8	social network analyses	[van Duijn & Vt 06; Borgatti et al 09] [Assignment 6 due]
4/13	big data	[Ford 14; link F]
4/15	discussion of issues	[Matsumoto & Jones 08] [Assignment 7 due]
4/20	presentations 2	
4/22	conclusions 1	[Ember 11; Schensul 11]
4/27	conclusions 2 (and course evaluations)	[Assignment 8 due]
5/1 – 12:00-3:00 p.m. (Final exam period)		[written reports 1 and 2 due]

Additional Course Materials

LINK A: American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics
<http://ethics.aaanet.org/ethics-statement-0-preamble/>

LINK B: College of Charleston IRB page:
http://orga.cofc.edu/pub/compliance_irb_index.shtml

LINK C: H. Kinzer & J. L. Gillies: “Cross-Cultural Analysis,” Department of Anthropology, U. of Alabama Anthropological Theories guide:

<http://anthropology.ua.edu/cultures/cultures.php?culture=Cross-Cultural%20Analysis>

LINK D: Human Relations Area Files page

<http://hraf.yale.edu/>

LINK E: U. of Toronto SPSS tutorial:

<http://www.psych.utoronto.ca/courses/c1/spss/toc.htm>

LINK F: Samuel. G. Collins: Poor Data, Rich Data, Big Data, Chief

<http://tomorrowculture.blogspot.com/2014/06/poor-data-rich-data-big-data-chief.html>

Additional resources: Any problems with any aspect of the course, don't hesitate to meet with me. Also, there are many good online articles on critical skills helpful to navigating this course and others. For example:

Critical thinking

http://www.criticalthinking.org/files/Concepts_Tools.pdf

Active reading

<http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/academic-success-tools/active-reading.html>

<http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/academic-success-tools/advanced-reading.html>

Critical reading

http://www.criticalreading.com/critical_reading.htm

Effective writing

http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/kingch/How_to_Write_a_Research_Paper.htm

And don't forget that you can always make use of the walk-in labs and individualized tutoring for working on your study, writing, and presentation skills at the Center for Student Learning (<http://csl.cofc.edu/about-the-CSL/index.php>).