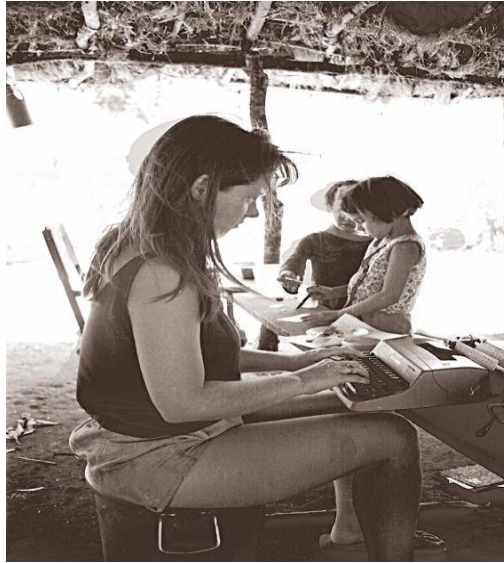


WS 5773.01 Qualitative Research Methods: The Ethnographic Field
Texas Woman's University
Fall 2009, Tuesdays 6-8:50 p.m.
Building ASB 304
(Course Code: 28050)



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Course Description:

Qualitative Research Methods: Ethnographic Field Methods will provide practice information, knowledge, and hands-on participation in the qualitative research process. We will examine what qualifies as feminist methodologies and participant action research in particular. We will discuss research design, implementation, interview techniques, fieldwork, “edgy” ethnography, participant observation, autobiography, and data analysis. Students will participate in qualitative research exercises, write fieldnotes, and critically examine research design and presentation. This course will stress critical thinking and academic writing development.

Students from all academic disciplines are welcome.

Course Objectives:

This course will introduce graduate students to field research theory and practice. We will gain an overview of significant fieldwork theories and issues important to fieldwork. In particular, students will learn how to pick a social site to research, make contacts with participants, observe social events in-depth, and write up their observation in fieldwork.

We will also learn how to engage with participants in the field, conduct interviews, create non-biased interview questions, protect confidentiality, and work ethically. We will learn how to conduct fieldwork, how long one should remain in the field, how to conclude the work, examine data, and write up academic research. We will present this work in an academic forum within class and discuss the ways in which the fieldwork is translated into academic writing and presentations.

Required Texts:

John W. Creswell (2006) *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*

Irving Seidman (2006) *Interviewing As Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*

Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, & Linda L. Shaw (1995) *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*

Sarah Pink (2006) *Doing Visual Ethnography*

Alice McIntyre (2007) *Participatory Action Research* (Qualitative Research Methods)

Jeff Ferrell & Mark S. Hamm (1998) *Ethnography at the Edge: Crime, Deviance, and Field Research*

Diane Waldman and Janet Walker eds. (1999) *Feminism and Documentary*

Additional articles will be provided on the course Blackboard online

Disability Support Services: If you need any accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, please register with the Office of Disability Support Services (CFO 106, 940-898-3835, dss@twu.edu) in order to obtain the required official notification of your accommodation needs. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss approved accommodations and how my course requirements may impact your ability to fully participate.

Course Conduct: Honesty in completing assignments is essential to the mission of the university and to the development of the personal integrity of the student. Cheating, plagiarism, or other kinds of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate sanctions that may include failing an assignment, failing the class, or being suspended or expelled. Suspected cases in this course may be reported to Student Life. The specific disciplinary process for academic dishonesty is found in the TWU Student Handbook. Tools to help you avoid plagiarism are available through the TWU Libraries at http://www.twu.edu/library/res/res_plagiarism.htm.

Additionally, while the class relies on discussion about potentially sensitive topics, it is important to be respectful towards one another. Talk in turn, one at a time, and listen to what each person says. Private conversations will not be tolerated, please direct comments to entire class. You will need to turn off cell phones and other electronic devices. You are required to attend each session, read the assigned text, and participate in the discussion.

TWU Write Site: For writing assistance, please visit the TWU Write Site, located at CFO 131. Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm, 898-2341 for appointment.

Assignments:

Total—points = 430

Points/grades

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = 0-60%

Fieldwork assignments— [5 x 25 = 125] We will be applying the field research theories that we read to several fieldwork activities. The activities will include: one in-depth interview, two field observations with fieldnotes, and two field observations with photograph presentations. In class, we will discuss choosing a topic, location, how to observe, how to write fieldnotes, interview questions, and how to photograph events for qualitative analysis.

- (1) *Activity*: in-depth interview, questions, & full transcription— Pick an individual woman that is involved with a social event that you would like to explore further (lifestyle, profession, hobbyist, identity, etc). Construct a set of non-biased, in-depth questions to be discussed and critiqued in class. Record and conduct the interview and then transcribe the interview fully and turn in the transcript. The interview should be 20 minutes to one hour in length. We will debrief in class on the process.
- (2) *Activity*: Write fieldnotes on public & private event— Select two different social locations, one “public” and one “private” (to be defined in class). Observe this field and write extensive fieldnotes about your observations.
- (2) *Activity*: photograph “event,” write narrative, and create PowerPoint Presentation— Towards the end of the semester we will read visual sociology theory and photography theory. These lessons will teach us how to incorporate visual data into our fieldwork and present this material in a sociologically significant manner. Choose two social events to document and take photographs or video data to record these events. This visual data should be put together in a PowerPoint to discuss in class, along with written descriptions of each photograph. You should also write fieldnotes along with these field observations, which can guide your in-class discussion.

Attendance— [16 sessions x 10 points = 160] Attendance is required for this course. Class meets only once a week; it is important to be there. With a total of 16 sessions, each class period is equal to ten points, with a total of 160 possible. You are also required to attend the entire class period. If you have a legitimate reason for absence, please go to student life to get a written statement; do not show me your doctor’s note. You will still be required to obtain the information that you missed from your classmates or through your own research and the points will not be earned.

Discussion Leader— [2 x 25 points = 50] During each class period, two students will lead a discussion of the assigned readings for a portion of the session. Please write up notes for your discussion that include a detailed summary of the readings, your impressions of the text, three discussion questions, and additional contextual information about the texts (info on the author's life, the particular text, the issue at hand, competing theories, anything referenced in the text.). The discussion leaders should contribute additional outside information that can assist us with understanding the text (all discussion leaders will post their separate or combined documents/handouts). The discussion leader must also post their notes on Blackboard 24 hours before the class session begins, include links to Web sites and a list of Works Cited (minimum of 250 words). During the first week of class, please e-mail me with which class period you would like to lead, by sending me a list with your top four choices. Aim to lead the class discussion for approximately 30-45 minutes. Coordinate the presentation with your session partner. Each session you lead is worth 25 points. Discussion leaders can post these notes on their reading summary blog.

Reading Summary Blog— [14 summaries x 5 points = 70] For each class, you will write a summary of the assigned readings, including the author's main point, outline of argument, and examples. Also include your reactions, opinions, and thoughts on the material. The summaries should be a balance between a summary and your reaction, but only one of these will not suffice. Please also include a potential discussion question that is thought provoking (not a short-answer question). These reading summaries are due in your personal blog and should provide the basis for the class discussion and your reference notes. They are a minimum of two pages. Each is worth five points.

Blackboard Responses— [5 x 5 points = 25] Each student must respond to the discussion leader's Blackboard posting on five different occasions throughout the semester. Each posting should include a thoughtful response to the particularities of the discussion leader's summary, the material, and the student's own perspective. Remember to keep a balance between summarizing the material and including your own perspective. Each response must be a minimum of 200 words. Please plan ahead and do not wait until the end of the semester to post your responses. You are welcome to post more than five responses, but will only get credit for five. Responses to a particular topic should be posted that same week that the topic was discussed. Each posting is worth five points. Once posted, please inform me via e-mail.

Class Schedule:

---9/1---

- Introduction to the course syllabus, classmates, definitions of fieldwork, and the uses of fieldwork in women's studies
- Pick two class periods to lead discussion and e-mail me your selection
- Discussion of possible topics for student fieldwork

---9/8---

- McIntyre: p. ix-69

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---9/15---

- Creswell: p. 1-100

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---9/22---

- Creswell: p.101-232

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---9/29---

- Seidman: p. ix-75
- *Activity*: in-depth interview questions

Student Presenters: 1) Ragen Roberts & 2) _____

---10/6---

- Seidman: p.78-144
- *Activity*: in-depth interview, questions, & full transcription

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---10/13---

- Emerson, Fretz, Shaw: p. vii-107
- *Activity*: Write fieldnotes on public event

Student Presenters: 1) & 2) _____

---10/20---

- Emerson, Fretz, Shaw: p. 108-216
- *Activity*: Write fieldnotes on private event

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---10/27---

- Ferrell & Hamm: p. xii-130

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---11/3---

- Ferrell & Hamm: p. 131-272

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---11/10---

- Pink: p. vi-95

Student Presenters: 1) Ragen Roberts & 2) _____

---11/17---

- Pink: p. 96-217
- *Activity*: photograph “event,” write narrative, and create PowerPoint Presentation

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---11/24---

- Photography articles on Blackboard
- *Activity*: photograph “event,” write narrative, and create PowerPoint Presentation

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---12/1---

- Waldman & Walker: p. 1-116
- *Movie*: *Storme: The lady of the jewel box* (Michelle Parkerson)

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---12/8---

- Waldman & Walker: p. 117-182; 267-338
- Guest speaker: Anna Bussart
- *Movie*: *What you take for granted* (Michelle Citron)

Student Presenters: 1) _____ & 2) _____

---12/15---

- **DUE:** Student discussion of research process