

## COURSE SYLLABUS



**Sociology 393**  
**Special Topics: The Art of Ethnography**  
**Department of Sociology, Moravian College**  
**Instructor: Dr. Akbar Keshodkar**  
**Fall 2015**

*Office Hours:* Tuesday, 1-2 pm, Thursday, 9-11am, or by appointment

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The course explores the scope of methodologies incorporated within contemporary cultural anthropology. Students will engage in examining epistemological perspectives in the practice of anthropology and work towards acquiring skills for conducting and carrying out various stages of ethnographic fieldwork, from research design, methods of data collection to developing tools of interpretive analysis and presenting their findings across different audiences, within and outside academia. Organized in the format of a seminar, the course begins by introducing students to the theoretical and ethical frameworks for conceptualizing anthropological knowledge and methodologies. Subsequently, the course will engage the students in contemplating, debating and discussing anthropological methods with the goal of acquiring the theoretical and practical skills to analyze qualitative and quantitative data, learn how to read and evaluate documents, develop the tools to carry out surveys, write a literature review and submerge themselves in the process of writing an academic research paper. The methodologies and skills introduced to the students in this course will enable them to approach research projects and papers in other courses in a more effective, efficient manner and empower them to pursue research related opportunities within and outside of academia after the completion of their undergraduate education.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of the course, students should have improved their ability in:

- Understanding the relationship between theory and data in the formulation of anthropological knowledge
- Acquiring different qualitative and quantitative skills associated with ethnographic fieldwork
- Analyzing different forms of data and integrating them to formulate an interpretative analysis
- Developing the analytical skills to write and present an academic paper in the discipline of anthropology

## **TEXT:**

### Required reading:

The following book is available for purchase at the college bookstore:

Bernard, H.R. and C.C. Gravlee (editors). 2015. *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Rowman and Littlefield (ISBN: 978-0-7591-20716)

Additional articles and other documents and resources required for the course can be accessed through the college library electronic journal database or will be posted on blackboard.

### Supplementary Reading:

Barley, N. 2000. *The Innocent Anthropologist: Notes from a Mud Hut*. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press

Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Charmaz, K. 2014. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. London: Sage

Clifford, J and G.E. Marcus. 1988. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press  
Dresch, P., W. James and D. Parkin (eds). 2000. *Anthropologists in a Wider World: Essays on Field Research*. Oxford: Berghahn.  
Emerson, R.M, R.I. Fretz, L.L. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, Second Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press  
Geertz, C. 1977. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books  
Rosaldo, R. 1993. *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press

#### Suggested Websites:

National Association of Student Anthropologists:

<http://www.studentanthropologists.org/>

Careers in Anthropology:

<http://www.aaanet.org/profdev/careers/index.cfm>

American Anthropological Association:

<http://www.aaanet.org/index.cfm>

This is Anthropology:

<http://www.thisisanthropology.org/>

#### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:**

1. *Attendance and Participation:* The course is organized primarily in the form of seminars, which requires extensive student participation in and engagement with course materials. Thus, students will be required to *attend* class regularly and *participate* in discussions. Questions, feedback, and student interaction are an integral part of the learning process, and will supplement lectures and films. Students should come prepared, having read the assigned materials prior to coming to class and having the materials accessible during class. Students are expected to work a minimum of 6-8 hours outside of class preparing for the course. Chronic absences, tardiness and leaving early will adversely affect your grade. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class on random days and tardiness or absences on those occasions will result in a deduction of 5 points per infraction from the class participation grade. Absences due to illness or emergencies must be communicated via email to the instructor prior to the class.
2. *Basic classroom rules:* Students are expected to use appropriate language with the instructor as well with each other, have their cell phones on silent and not be involved in personal conversations with each other or any activities which would disrupt the classroom environment. If a student needs to check/send a text message, they are requested to do so outside the classroom. Infraction of these rules will result in a deduction of 20 class participation points for each infraction and the student may be asked to leave the classroom.
3. *Plagiarism:* I take plagiarism, copying someone else's work and representing it as your own, very seriously. This applies to all work submitted for the course. Students will be required to submitted all work done outside of the classroom on Safe Assign, through Blackboard. If a student's work is suspected of plagiarism, the student as well the Dean's office will be notified of the offence and it will be the student's responsibility to demonstrate evidence

reflecting the originality of the work, such as all notes and other materials utilized in developing the submitted work. **Plagiarism, academic dishonesty, or cheating will result in an automatic grade of F for the course.** Students should refer to the college's academic handbook for more information about plagiarism.

4. *Blackboard*: All assignments, additional reading materials, announcements and information related to the course, including grades for all assignments, will be posted on Blackboard. It is the students' responsibility to check Blackboard and their Moravian College email on a regular basis throughout the semester.
5. *Accommodating disabilities*: Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic and Disability Support, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.
6. *Assignments*: Given the extent to which the course focuses on development of critical thinking and practical skills for conceptualizing and practicing anthropological methods, there will be a number of in-class and out of class assignments throughout the semester. Each assignment will be weighted differently, depending on the nature and complexity of the assignments.
7. *Quizzes*: There will be a number of short quizzes throughout the semester assessing students' comprehension of course materials and skills related to the practice of anthropology. The quizzes will be administered at the conclusion of the classes.
8. *Research Paper*: Through the skills and content that students learn in the course, they will develop a research paper, which will be submitted towards the end of the semester. Details for the research paper will be provided in class. The content of the research paper, which will require students to demonstrate the ability to incorporate theoretical considerations and variety of skills covered in the course, will account for 25% of the grade for the course. The paper should be student's own work, submitted typed, doubled spaced, in Times New Roman font, Type 12, with standard margins and with proper citations and a bibliography. Under no circumstances should online sites such as Wikipedia.com and other popular websites be utilized as references. Papers should be a minimum of 20 pages in length. No late papers will be accepted.
9. *Presentations*: Students will be required to make a number of presentations as a result of their engagement with course materials. These presentations will be assessed as part of class participation and assignments (described above). Students will also be required to make a 30-minute presentation on their research topics during the final class meeting. There is a separate grade allocated for this presentation. More details about the research paper presentation as well as an accompanying rubric will be posted on blackboard.
10. *Midterm/Final Exam*: Given that this course is based around development of different skills, there will be no specific midterm or final exam in this course. The research paper will be represented as the final exam and the various forms of assessments outlined above will serve as the primary means through which students will be assessed in this course.

11. *Explanation and Breakdown of Grades:*

Attendance and Class Participation	20%
Assignments	35%
Quizzes	15%
Research Paper	20%
Research Paper Presentation	10%

Grade Equivalence		
A	4.0	93 – 100
A-	3.7	90 – 92.9%
B+	3.3	87 – 89.9%
B	3.0	83 – 86.9%
B-	2.7	80 – 82.9%
C+	2.3	77 – 79.9%
C	2.0	73 – 76.9%
C-	1.7	70 – 72.9%
D+	1.3	67 – 69.9%
D	1.0	63 – 66.9%
D-	0.7	60 – 62.9%
F	0	59.9% and below

- A/A-: Excellent; performance was outstanding and surpassed all expectations set forth in the course; consistently displayed superior grasp of course materials in assessments and through participation in class activities
- B+/B: Above average; fulfilled all requirements set forth in the course with a very good grasp of course materials in assessments and through class participation
- B-/C+/C: Average; adequately fulfilled course requirements, average performance on assessments, participation in class activities was satisfactory
- C-/D+/D/D-: Below average; performance minimally acceptable to pass the course, consistently displaying inadequate understanding of course materials on assessments and not sufficiently participating in class activities
- F: Failure to demonstrate basic understanding of course materials, consistently underperforming on assessments and not adequately participating in class activities

12. *Withdrawals/Incompletes:* Under no circumstances will a student receive an academic incomplete if they are failing the course or if they have done little or no work. In circumstances that an Incomplete is given, it will be the responsibility of the student to ensure that the work is submitted on time and meets the requirements of the course. If work is not submitted by the deadline given, the student will automatically receive an “F”.

## COURSE OUTLINE/SCHEDULE

The course will meet on Tuesdays, 8:55 am – 11:30 am. Students are required to come prepared for each class, having completing the reading assignments beforehand. Unless indicated, all the required readings listed below are from Bernard and Gravlee (BG). All other documents can be accessible through the links provided or will be posted on Blackboard (BB) and can also be accessed through the college library's electronic journal collection.

### Part I – Theory and Approach to Anthropological Methods

#### Week 1:

1 Sept 2015                    Introduction to the Course; Discussion of course expectations  
Ch. 1 – Epistemology: The Nature and Validation of Knowledge, 21-54 (BG)

#### Week 2:

8 Sept 2015                    Ch. 2 – In Search of Meaningful Methods, pp. 55-96 (BG)  
Ch. 3 – Research Design and Research Strategies, pp. 97-130 (BG)

#### Week 3:

15 Sept 2015                    Ch. 4 – Ethics, pp. 131-150 (BG)  
Ch. 6 – Participatory Methods and Community Based Collaborations, pp. 185-213 (BG)  
Assignment Due: Research Question(s) for paper

### Part II – Practicing Anthropological Methods

#### Week 4:

22 Sept 2015                    Ch. 8 – Participant Observation, pp. 251-292 (BG)  
Ch. 7 – Sampling and Selecting Participants in Field Research, pp. 215-250 (BG)

#### Week 5:

29 Sept 2015                    Ch. 10 – Person Centered Interviewing and Observation, pp. 313-342 (BG)  
Ch. 11 – Structured Interviewing and Questionnaire Construction, pp. 343-390 (BG)  
Assignment Due: Research Paper Annotated bibliography

#### Week 6:

6 Oct 2015                    Ch. 12 – Discourse Centered Methods, pp. 391-438 (BG)  
Ch. 15 – Social Survey Methods, pp. 497-517 (BG)

#### Week 7:

13 Oct 2015                    NO CLASS – FALL RECESS

### Part III – Interpreting Anthropological Data, Constructing Anthropological Knowledge

#### Week 8:

20 Oct 2015                    Ch. 16 – Reasoning with Numbers, pp. 519-532 (BG)  
Assignment Due: Transcriptions of 2 Interviews, with interviewer notes

Week 9:  
27 Oct 2015

Ch. 17 – Textual Analysis, pp. 533-560 (BG)  
Assignment Due: Research Surveys and results

Week 10:  
3 Nov 2015

Ch. 18 – Cross Cultural Research, pp. 561-600 (BG)  
Assignment Due: Research Paper abstract, Introduction and Methodology

Week 11:  
10 Nov 2015

Ch. 20 – Social Network Analysis, pp. 631-659 (BG)

#### Part IV – Applying Anthropological Knowledge

Week 12:  
17 Nov 2015

Ch. 21 – Theories and Methods in Applied Anthropology, pp. 661-694 (BG)  
Assignment Due: Draft of Research paper

Week 13:  
24 Nov 2015

Ch. 22 – Presenting Anthropology to Diverse Audiences, pp. 695-718 (BG)

Week 14:  
1 Dec 2015

Ch. 23 – Public Anthropology, pp. 719-734 (BG)

Week 15:  
8 Dec 2015

Research Paper Presentations (30 mins each)  
Lecture – The value of Anthropological methods and knowledge  
**Final Research Papers Due**

### Writing Assessment Rubric for the Course:

Criteria	Comments	Percentage			
		Strong	Good	Adequate	Weak
<b>Content Analysis (70%)</b> How well does the student respond to the Question/prompt? Are the arguments relevant, sufficient, explained clearly, persuasive? Is the synthesis of information adequate, and can the student differentiate between objective and subjective analysis? Is the thesis well developed? Is there both a specific and broader dimension to the argument? Is the evidence sufficient and adequately explained in relevance to the thesis?		Strong	Good	Adequate	Weak
		63-70	54-62	49-53	48 >
		/ 70%			
<b>Information Literacy (10%)</b> Has the student chosen appropriate sources? Has the student utilized sufficient number of sources? Is quoted material used effectively? Are sources acknowledge and cited correctly (in-text and bibliography)? Are citations missing?		Strong	Good	Adequate	Weak
		9-10	8	7	6 >
		/ 10%			
<b>Organization &amp; Style (10%)</b> Is the essay well-organized, with an introduction and conclusion? Is supporting evidence presented logically within each paragraph? Are there clear and appropriate links between the paragraphs? Does the student use an academic writing style, with a variety of well-structured simple, compound and complex sentences? Is the vocabulary sufficiently academic and accurate?		Strong	Good	Adequate	Weak
		9-10	8	7	6 >
		/ 10%			
<b>Correctness / Accuracy (10%)</b> Are commas and full-stops used accurately? Are capital letters used correctly? Is spelling sufficiently accurate? Are verb forms (tense and agreement) used appropriately and accurately?		Strong	Good	Adequate	Weak
		9-10	8	7	6 >
		/ 10%			
Total Percentage		/ 100%			



#### A paper (90-100%)

- The student responds well to the prompt, using relevant, logical arguments with strong understanding of the evidence.
- Sources are appropriate for the topic, and quoted material is used effectively. All sources are correctly cited.
- The essay is well-organized, with a clear thesis, evidence is presented clearly, and the ideas and paragraphs are well-linked. The student uses an academic writing style, with a variety of sentence types, and academic vocabulary use is varied and appropriate for the topic.
- Language use is accurate, with correct punctuations and spelling. Occasional errors with prepositions and articles.

#### B paper (80-89%)

- The student responds reasonably well to the prompt, and most of the arguments and evidence are relevant, with clear understanding of the evidence.
- Most sources are appropriate for the topic, and quoted material is used effectively most of the time. Only occasional inaccuracies of logic or citation.
- The essay is mostly well-organized, with a clear thesis, some evidence is presented clearly, and the ideas are well-linked. The student uses an academic writing style, with a variety of sentence types that are mostly well-structured. Academic vocabulary use is varied and mostly appropriate for the topic.
- Language use is mostly accurate, punctuation is generally well-controlled, some spelling errors in less common words. May be several errors with prepositions and articles.

#### C paper (70-79%)

- The student responds adequately to the prompt, with some arguments and evidence that are relevant and with partial understanding of the evidence.
- Most sources are appropriate for the topic, and quoted material is used effectively some of the time. More frequent inaccuracies of logic and citation.
- Attempts to organize the essay, with a thesis, and attempts to organize ideas within paragraphs, but with only limited success. Some evidence is presented clearly, and some ideas are well-linked. The student attempts to use an academic writing style, with a variety of simple and compound sentence that are mostly well-structured, and some complex sentences. Academic vocabulary is attempted.
- Language use is varied, attempts at accurate punctuation, but more frequent errors, frequent spelling mistakes in less common words. Errors with prepositions and articles may be frequent, but do not impede meaning.

#### D paper (60-69%)

- The student responds minimally to the prompt, with limited arguments and evidence that are relevant and with little understanding of the evidence.
- Some sources are relevant for the topic, but quoted material is often ineffective or inappropriate. Frequent inaccuracies of logic and citation.
- Limited attempt to organize the essay, thesis is unclear, and limited attempts to organize ideas within paragraphs. Evidence and ideas are not presented clearly or logically linked. The student has limited control of academic writing style, sentences are poorly-structured, and complex sentences are rarely attempted. Vocabulary use is rather basic.
- Language use is varied, punctuation is often inaccurate, spelling mistakes even in common words. Errors with prepositions, articles, verb forms may be frequent and sometimes impede meaning.

#### Failing paper (below 60%)

- Failure to respond to the prompt, with irrelevant information and little or no understanding of the evidence.
- Sources are not relevant, and quoted material, if any, is ineffective or inappropriate. No attempt at citation.
- Very little attempt to organize the essay, no thesis is presented, and information within paragraphs is not organized. Evidence and ideas are unclear. Academic writing style is not attempted, and even basic sentences are poorly -structured. Vocabulary use is inadequate.
- Little control of language, with inaccurate punctuation and frequent spelling mistakes in common words. Errors with prepositions, articles, verb forms are frequent and cause difficulty for the reader.