

Field Methods in Cultural Anthropology. CAA 300.

American University-Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Instructor: Rahimov R., e-mail: anthroporus@gmail.com.
Class time: M.Wed. 10.50 225/326
Office hours: W. 2- 4 p.m.
Credit: 3.0 credits

Course description:

This course will introduce students to the qualitative research methods, with a focus on the tools of ethnography: interview techniques, survey methods and qualitative data analysis. Students will gain some practical experience in research design, developing research questions, selecting research site(s), case(s), and informants; conducting interviews, observation and participant observation and analyzing collected data. The main goal of the course is to prepare the students to the summer fieldwork.

At the end of the semester, the students will have prepared a research proposal for summer field work. Further information and guidelines will be distributed in class.

Teaching materials: readings, field materials, photo-video documentation. See Bibliography for readings.

Class format: We will always have a mixture of a discussion and lecture/ presentation by me, other lecturers and students

Discussion of the reading materials: All readings are available in AUCA library. Students are expected to come to all classes having completed the assigned readings.

In addition to the course texts you are required to use other materials in preparing your literature review for your own research proposal.

Research proposal for summer field work will be presented last two weeks and should include the following:

- Statement of the research problem, its significance, Hypothesis
- Literature review
- Methodology statement: recognize that ethnographic research is inherently a “multi-methods” approach and that your techniques must be stated clearly in relationship to your specific questions/ aims. Clearly describe criteria for selection of sites, cases, informants, events/processes.
- List of interview questions
- Timeline and research schedule: provide a clear timeline, discuss how different phases of research will be sequenced and integrated
- Expected outcomes

Dates:

First draft due end of 6th week

Revised proposal due 12th week

Presentation of final version of Research Proposal due 15th week

Projects: In this course the students will be asked to submit 4 written assignments, which will be short and practical, and will report on your experience in using research techniques. Results of the project will be presented in the class

#Literature review project. (deadline - week 5) Students are expected to find 3 academic articles related to their research topic and highlight the following :

- What is the main research question of the paper? How this question relates to my topic? How can I specify my own research question?
- What is author's theory? How this theory helps me to understand my research topic? How author did use his theory to data collection and its analysis ?
- How am I going to apply theories that I am reading to my own topic ?

Sampling project. (deadline- week 6). This is a description of sampling frame for observational activities, interviewing and key informant. The paper (1 page) should discuss the possible venues for participation and observation, and how you will choose venues, times, etc to be representative. It should also include a discussion of people or groups you will identify as possible informants and how you will recruit a representative sampling.

Observation project: Space and Social interaction (deadline- week 8)

This project requires you to observe and describe a space on repeated occasions in order to describe the spatial ordering of social interaction. **Note:** this assignment is **non-interactive** observation of public behaviour. Take notes over the course at least three visits to the location you pick that will enable you to write 3-4 pages report that describes the physical layout of the place, the patterns of activity that take place in that place, the different social actors who engage in activities in that place, the ways in which people arrange or use space –either officially or unofficially - to promote or discourage particular kinds of activities or interactions.

Interview project (deadline- week 11) includes the list of Interview questions; information about how informants were selected; how these interviews will help you to test your hypothesis; transcription of the 3 interviews and its analysis. The size of the report: 3-5 pages without transcriptions of the interviews.

Extra bonus (10 %): Small ethnographic film may be done by a team of 2-3 students on different issues. The film should demonstrate course topics.

Guest Lecturers: 2 lecturers from the faculty of the Anthropology Department will present perspectives on different aspects of ethnographic research.

Course Requirements and Grading:

- Attendance and Participation -15%.
- Mini-Projects (5-10 pages each) - 60% (15 for each)
- Final research proposal (4-6) -25%

96-100A

95-91 A-

90-86 B+

85-81 B

80-76 B-

75-71 C+

70- 66 C

65-61 C-

60-56 D+

55-51 D

50- 46 D-

45 and lower F

- Students are required to attend all classes.

- Students are expected to come to each class with completed readings
- Four unexcused absence will result in X for the course. In order to ensure that each of you attend class, I will be taking attendance
- Students are expected to make a presentation of the projects in the seminar class

Course readings:

- Spradley J.P., *The Ethnographic Interview*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979
- Spradley J.P., *Participant Observation*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1980
- Michrina, Barry P and Cheryl Anne Richards. *Person to Person: Fieldwork, Dialogue and the Hermeneutic Method*. State University of New York Press, Albany, 1996.
- Kutsche, Paul *Field Ethnography: a manual for doing cultural anthropology*. 1998
- Bernard R. *Research Methods in Anthropology*. SAGE Publications, Inc. 1994 or *Handbook of Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, Altamira, 1998
- Corrine Glesne *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*. University of Vermont. 1999

Additional textbooks:

- GColomb, Joseph M Williams *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago Press. 200
- Van Maanen, *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. John. University of Chicago Press. 1988
- Case Study Research. Design and Methods. Robert K. Yin. *Applied Social Research Methods Series*. Volume 5
- Handbook of Ethnography*. Edited by Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont.... Sage Publication
- Anthropology: A Student's Guide to Theory and Method* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press)

Schedule:

Week 1. Introduction: The nature of Anthropological Research

1. Syllabus presentation and its discussion
2. Michrina, Barry P. and Cheryl Anne Richards. *Person to Person: Fieldwork, Dialogue and the Hermeneutic Method*. pp.3-21
3. Bernard R. *Research Methods in Anthropology*. SAGE Publications, Inc. 1994 pp.1-50

Week 2. Designing a research project.

1. Guidelines for research proposals in Anthropology drafted by Ted Bestor

2. Class exercises: Evaluation of Research Projects (papers) based on Ted Bestor's Guidelines-
 - a) formulation of research topic, question and hypothesis, b) application of the theory c) bibliography d) research methods e) research site f) introduction and conclusion of the paper
3. Class exercises: Formulation of the research topic and three objectives

Week 3. Ethics.

1. Movie "Bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan"
 2. *Person to Person*. pp. 97-108
- Class exercise: How are you going to solve ethical issues in your summer field work?

Week 4. 5. 6. Observation

1. Locating a social situation/ Spradley J.P., *Participant Observation*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1980, pp.39-52
2. Doing Participant observation/ Spradley J.P., *Participant Observation*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1980, pp.53-62, 73-85. Movie by Shahrani N.
3. Making descriptive, focused, selected observation/ Spradley J.P., *Participant Observation*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1980, pp.100-111, 123-129

4. Discussion: Map of Block . Kutsche, Paul Field Ethnography: a manual for doing cultural anthropology. 1998
5. Bernard R. Research Methods in Anthropology. SAGE Publications, Inc. 1994 pp 136-165
6. Class exercise: a) Comments on papers where observation and description of the physical layout of the place, the patterns of activity that take place in that place were chosen as the main research methods .b) preparation for conducting observation.
- 7) Field notes: Person to Person...pp. 61-71
- 8) Presentation of the results and difficulties of the first **project** (first group of students). Other students will give comments.

Week 7 .8.

1. Comments on student's proposals (at least on 3 proposals).
2. Presentation of the results and difficulties of the first **project** (second group)
3. Guest lecturer

Week 9 - 12. Interview

1. Spradley J.P., The Ethnographic Interview. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979.pp.45-69
2. Spradley J.P., The Ethnographic Interview. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979.pp 78-91,120-131,155-172
3. Corrine Glesne Becoming Qualitative Researchers. University of Vermont. 1999
4. Class exercise: Field work 2007. Comments on Interview questions (why some questions were successful, others weren't), Corrections, Alternative questions. P/P List of questions p.53, Qualitative Research. Research Questions.
5. Group work: the students will work in 4 groups, they have to choose one ethnic group and read all 30-35 interviews before the class. What data was collected? What conclusion can you make about this research? What story can you tell about that ethnic group based on collected data?
6. Class discussion: Interview questions (which will be used for the second project) will be discussed in the class.
7. Movie : Eastern Turkistan by Shown Roberts
8. Interview **project**: results and difficulties (first group)
9. Interview **project**: results and difficulties (second group)

Week 13. 14. Writing

1. Person to person. P.83-95., Spradley. Ethn Inter.pp204-216
2. Arguments, claims, evidence./ The Craft of Research. University of Chicago Press.2000
3. Discussion of Big Ethnography.(2 articles)
from Kutsche, Paul Field Ethnography: a manual for doing cultural anthropology. 1998
4. Discussion of Ethnography (professor's suggestion)

Week 15 - 16. Presentation of research proposals