

FIELDWORK AND LABORATORY METHODS: TOOLS, APPROACHES, AND ETHICS

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY SEMINAR – MUS 2442 (SPRING 2013)

Instructor: Dr. Adriana Helbig, Assistant Professor of Music, University of Pittsburgh
Seminar Tuesday, 9-11:20am Music Building 302
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I. Course Description

This course prepares participants for conducting fieldwork and using fieldwork data in social-science research. By ‘fieldwork’ we mean data collection through face-to-face interaction with people in their daily lives, using participant observation, interviews, recording, and experiencing music in context. The sessions roughly follow the chronology from pre-fieldwork planning to post-fieldwork representation of data, and address both practical and principle concerns at each stage. Discussions of ethical challenges are integrated throughout. Rather than attempting to provide blueprint answers, the course seeks to help participants reflect upon the dilemmas and challenges of fieldwork and make informed decisions for their own research.

II. Course Objectives

- To analyze strategies of research design
- To examine ethical considerations important in gaining ethnographic information
- To implement research methods used in fieldwork
- To practice interviewing skills and participant observation
- To assess relationships and risks in the field
- To learn note-taking and recording techniques in the field
- To analyze fieldwork data
- To critically assess writing and representation of fieldwork data

III. Projects:

A. One written report on an ethnography in ethnomusicology (due Jan 15)

Students will choose one ethnography written by an ethnomusicologist to read and to write a 5 page report addressing topic, scope, theoretical framework, rationale, methodology, and research findings.

B. Comparative oral report on 2 ethnographies in ethnomusicology (due Jan 22)

Students will choose two ethnographies written by two ethnomusicologists of a different race, gender, age conducting research in different ethnographic settings to read and to present a comparative report on ethnographic field methods, theoretical frameworks, and resulting presentation in book form.

C. Individual fieldwork project (ongoing throughout the semester)

Students will conceptualize and research an ethnographic project based in Pittsburgh. Weekly visits to the field site will generate ethnographic information to be analyzed in class meetings focusing on ethnographic methods, techniques, recordings and interviews,

fieldnotes. The fieldwork process will be broken up into 3 sections during the semester -
1) finding a fieldwork site; 2) fieldnote, audio/video transcription and analysis;
3) writing, representation, and project assessment.

D. 15 page paper (due April 5) and 20 minute oral presentation (due April 16)

At the end of the semester, each student will submit a fifteen-page research paper of conference-presentation quality drawing on the theoretical and methodological issues addressed in the semester-long ethnographic fieldwork project. The project must connect to broader conversations in ethnomusicology and must utilize contemporary and innovative approaches to ethnography. The project will be presented in written and oral form, with students in the class offering peer evaluations on both forms of presentation. Students must use at least 20 bibliographic sources not included on the syllabus for this course.

IV. Grading:

Ethnography reports – 25%

Fieldwork (preparation, implementation, weekly site visits) – 25%

Research paper and oral presentation – 25%

In class participation and preparedness – 25%

V. Required Readings:

Barz, Gregory and Timothy Cooley, eds. (2008). *Shadows in the Field*. New York: Oxford University Press (FULL TEXT ONLINE)

Clifford, James and George Marcus. (1986). *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Emerson et al. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (MUSIC RESERVE)

Hammersley, M, and Atkinson, P. (2007) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 3rd Edition. Abingdon: Routledge. (MUSIC RESERVE)

Jackson, Bruce. (1987). *Fieldwork*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Van Maanen, John. 1988. *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (MUSIC RESERVE)

Recommended:

Bauman, Richard and Charles Briggs. 2003. *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality*. Cambridge University Press.

Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

VI. Weekly Meetings and Assignments

Week 1 - January 8 – Introduction to the course

Historical orientation of ethnography in ethnomusicology; Topic, Scope, Theoretical Framework, Rationale, Methodology, Research Findings

Week 2 - January 15 - Writing Culture

DUE Report on Ethnography: Choose one of the ethnographies listed below write an essay of approximately 5 pages in length (double-spaced). Devote one paragraph each to Topic, Scope, Rationale, Theoretical Framework, Methodology, and Research Findings.

Blacking, John. 1973. *How Musical Is Man?* University of Washington Press.

Feld, Steven. 1990 [second edition]. *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression.* University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hagedorn, Katherine. 2001. *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santeria.* Smithsonian Books.

Hahn, Tomie. 2007. *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture Through Japanese Dance.* Wesleyan University Press.

Keil, Charles. 1979. *Tiv Song.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kingsbury, Henry. 1998. *Music, Talent, and Performance: A Conservatory Cultural System.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Kisliuk, Michelle. 1998. *Seize the Dance! : BaAka musical life and the Ethnography of Performance.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Larkin, Brian. *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria.* 2008. Duke University Press.

McAllester, David. 1949. *Peyote Music.* New York: Viking Fund publications in anthropology, no. 13.

Meijntes, Louise. 2003. *Sound of Africa! Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio.* Duke University Press.

Merriam, Alan. (1967). *The Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians.* Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

Seeger, Anthony. 1987. *Why Suyu Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Turino, Thomas. 1993. *Moving Away from Silence.* University of Chicago Press.

Wong, Deborah. 2004. *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music.* Routledge.

Week 3 - January 22 – Writing Culture cont.

SECOND Report on Ethnography: Read TWO ethnographies listed above (different from the 3 that were presented by students on January 15) to discuss orally in class, offering information about the differences and similarities in Topic, Scope, Rationale, Theoretical Framework, Methodology, and Research Findings. You will not be required to write an essay but please make copious notes on the readings to present your insights on ethnographic methods and presentations employed by the author with clarity for the class. You may substitute ONE of the ethnographies from the list above for one that pertains to your interests/area of research.

Week 4 - January 29 – Gaining Access

Choose an ethnographic fieldwork site in Pittsburgh. Prepare an in-class PowerPoint presentation of your chosen site, including main research questions, preliminary research methodologies, theoretical scope of project, and feasibility of completion by the end of the term (the project may be related to your master's/dissertation research). Include preliminary pictures and music examples that may characterize your fieldwork site. Prepare possible interview questions and questionnaires to distribute to the class that will help formulate your research agenda. Class time will focus on helping each student sharpen research questions. Students will offer each other feedback on research projects.

Reading:

Jackson, Bruce (1987) – Part One / Doing Fieldwork – p.1-60

Week 5 – February 5 – Interviewing

Hammersley, M, and Atkinson, P. (2007) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 3rd Edition. Abingdon: Routledge. Chapter 4. Field relations. Chapter 5, Oral accounts and the role of interviewing.

Jackson, Bruce (1987) – Part Two/Doing It – p.63-104

*Bring a preliminary list of 3-5 people you can interview. Make initial contact by phone with at least ONE interlocutor and set up interview to conduct this week.

Week 6 – February 12 - Audio and Video Recording Techniques

Introduction to photography, field recording, and video recording equipment; please bring in any recording equipment that you have as well as information on software that you use for transcription, audio/video editing; we will set up a hands-on workshop to work on these issues

Reading:

Jackson, Bruce (1987) – Part Three / Mechanical Matters – p. 105-256

Schafer, R. Murray. (1993). "Introduction," "Listening" and "The Acoustic Community," In *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Pp. 2-12, 205-225.

Week 7 - February 19 – Fieldnotes

Reading: Barz, Gregory and Timothy Cooley (2008) *Shadows in the Field* – Part 1: Doing and Undoing Fieldwork p. 23-86; Part II – Knowing and Being Known – p.87-138

Emerson et al. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

DUE: Transcription of one interview with an interlocutor at your field site in Pittsburgh

Week 8 - February 26 – The Ethnographic Voice

Ethnographic authority, modes of presentation, collaborative representation between fieldworker and interlocutor

Readings:

Marcus, George and Michael M.J. Fischer. 1986. "Ethnography and Interpretive Anthropology." In *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 17-44.

Clifford, James. 1983. "On Ethnographic Authority." *Representations* 1(2):118-146.

Van Maanen, John. 1988. *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

DUE: Analyzing your fieldnotes for this week, reflect on questions of authority and power, using specific examples from your field project.

Week 9 - March 5 – Writing

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 3-32.

DUE: 5 pages of ethnographic writing based on your project for peer editing (we will read and comment on each other's papers in class)

Week 10 - March 12 – no classes (Spring Break)

Week 11 - March 19 – Problematizing Technology

Returning recordings to interlocutors, working with archives, government agencies, museums, the ethnomusicologist's responsibility towards interlocutors

Readings:

Brady, Erika. 1999. *A Spiral Way: How the Phonograph Changed Ethnography*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi. (MUSIC RESERVE)

Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Week 12 - March 26 – Project Proposals/Funding

Turning your project into a proposal – hands-on workshop on how to present your project for funding when you have not yet completed fieldwork

Week 13 - April 2 – no class

Please use the extra time to work on your 15 page papers due April 5, 5pm - please email your papers to everyone in the class for peer review and discussion in class on April 9

Week 14 - April 9 – In-class discussions of class papers

Week 15 - April 16 – Final Oral Presentations (20 minutes)

VII. Online Resources – Fieldwork Ethics

SEM Position Statement on Ethnographic Research and Institutional Review Board

http://webdb.iu.edu/sem/scripts/aboutus/aboutsem/positionstatements/position_statement_irb.cfm

A Statement of Ethics for the American Folklore Society

<http://www.afsnet.org/?page=Ethics>

Handbook on Ethical Issues in Anthropology

<http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/toc.htm>

American Sociological Association statement of ethics:

<http://www2.asanet.org/members/ecoderev.html>