

San José State University
Anthropology Department
Anth 149, Ethnographic Methods, Section 1, Fall 2016

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Jan English-Lueck
Office Location:	WSQ 004
Telephone:	(408) 924-5347
Email:	Jan.English-Lueck@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Monday 1:30- 3:30pm, Tuesday 1:30-2:30 pm or by appt.
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday, Thursday 12:00-1:15
Classroom:	Clark 459
Prerequisites:	ANTH 11 or instructor consent

Course Format

Technology

The course will use a Canvas site for access to articles. Interviews and other shared ethnographic resources will be places in a Google Drive:

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B7WwuzOgLX55aXBUZ1YxVGJBVU0andusp=sharing>.

Canvas and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [MySJSU](#) at <http://my.sjsu.edu> (or other communication system as indicated by the instructor) to learn of any updates.

Course Description

This course covers the conduct of ethnographic research within cultural anthropology (in particular) and the social sciences and applied fields (in general). Students are introduced to basic concepts in social science research, ethics in social research, selection of research topics, the literature search, basic ethnographic data collection methods (participant observation; un-, semi- and structured interviewing; and structured observation), managing and coding field notes, qualitative analysis; presentation of results, and ethnographic writing. Due to the limitations imposed by a one-semester course, some topics are covered in more depth than others. The emphasis is on becoming a generator of reliable and useful information about the social world by appropriately using ethnographic methods.¹

¹ Note this course structure was developed by Drs. Darrah, Gonzalez, Pitchon and English-Lueck, with input from Dr. Faas.

Departmental Program Learning Outcomes

The Department of Anthropology seeks to enhance student knowledge and skills in the following areas. Departmental objectives that this course explicitly addresses are asterisked.

Knowledge

1. Understanding culture as the distinguishing phenomenon of human life, and the relationships of human biology and cultural processes in human behavior and evolution.
2. Awareness of the diverse past and present cultures in which humans have lived.
3. Knowledge of the significant findings of archaeology, cultural anthropology, and physical anthropology, and familiarity with the important issues in each sub-discipline.
- *4. Knowledge of the history of anthropological thought and its place in modern intellectual history.
5. Comprehension of multiculturalism as a significant phenomenon shaping global society.

Skills

- *6. Familiarity with the forms of anthropological data and literature, and working knowledge of how to access such information.
- *7. Awareness of the importance and value of anthropological knowledge in contemporary society, and the ability to apply it to social issues.
- *8. Knowledge of the research methods of the sub-disciplines of anthropology, and ability to apply appropriate research methods in at least one sub-discipline.
- *9. Ability to present and communicate anthropological knowledge and the results of anthropological research to different audiences.

Delivery

- *10. Knowledge of political and ethical implications of social research

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the place of ethnography as process and product within cultural anthropology and the social sciences;
2. Develop the abilities to formulate problems and design ethnographic studies to explore them;
3. Conduct interviews and perform direct observations of social settings as appropriate;

4. Analyze textual or “qualitative” data for patterns and themes;
5. Demonstrate their abilities in note taking and writing ethnographic reports; and
6. Identify the ethical and political aspects of social research.

These objectives will be achieved largely through your active, meaningful, and collective participation in a research project. By enrolling in this course you are effectively joining a research team that is conducting an actual long-term research project in this region. Individual students will be more or less interested in the actual research we will be undertaking, but you are reminded that the overall goal of the class is to develop research skills, regardless of topic. I believe that your mastery of ethnographic methods is facilitated by employing them in the real world, where things do not always unfold as they do in textbooks. You will learn by reading assigned course materials, discussing them in class, participating in several in-class exercises, utilizing the methods of ethnographic research, and reflecting upon them in several assignments. All methods will be discussed in class, and your occasionally sage instructor is available to assist in any way he can: You will not be left alone to figure it all out for yourself.

It is my practice in this course to bring in a real world partner who is grappling with an issue or problem of some sort. The class research team then explores this problem and feeds back its findings to the partner. Some previous partners have been The Health Trust, Santa Clara County Office of Education, Junior Achievement, Working Partnerships, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The Tech Museum of Innovation, Smart Valley, CommUniverCity, Kaiser Permanente, and the Institute for the Future. This semester the class will be working with CommUniverCity’s Hensley and Japantown neighborhoods to assess disaster preparedness. Our task will be facilitated by Applied Anthropology graduate student Vanessa Castro, under the advisement of Dr. A.J. Fass. We will be conducting data collection and analysis, in order to enrich educational efforts in the community around disaster preparedness and provoke community involvement. This is a real project with serious stakes and your participation in the project will be formally acknowledged in a way that you can incorporate into your resume or application to graduate or professional school. Because this is a decidedly real-world class, it is likely that the syllabus will be modified as the semester progresses and we adapt to the realities of fieldwork.

Required Texts/Readings

Required Textbooks

Margaret D. LeCompte, Jean J. Schensul, *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*. Altamira Press. ISBN. 9780759118690.

Jean Schensul and Margaret D. LeCompte, *Essential Ethnographic Methods: A Mixed Methods Approach*, 2nd Edition. Altamira Press. ISBN. 9780759118690.

Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, 2nd Edition. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 9780226206837

Recommended Textbook

Sally Campbell Galman, *Shane, the Lone Ethnographer*. Altamira Press. ISBN.

Other Readings

(Available through Canvas).

2003 Bestor, Theodore. Inquisitive Observation: Following Networks in Urban Fieldwork. In *Doing Fieldwork in Japan*. Theodore Bestor, Patricia Steinhoff and Victoria Bestor, Eds. Pp. 315-334. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

2012 Boellstorff, Tom et. al. "Other Data Collection Methods for Virtual World Research." *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

2015 Casagrande, David, Heather McIlvaine-Newsad, and Eric Jones, Social Networks of Help-Seeking in Different Types of Disaster Responses to the 2008 Mississippi River Floods. *Human Organization* 74 (4):351-361.

2015 Faas, A.J. and Roberto Barrios, Applied Anthropology of Risk, Hazards, and Disasters. *Human Organization* 74(4): 287-295.

Japantown Website. <http://www.japantownsanjose.org/> especially Japantown Prepared.

San Jose Prepared Website: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=1404>

Other equipment / material

You will need to use a digital audio and photographic recording device that can transfer files. We have a limited set of such devices, Apple ipads, to be checked out of the Anthropology Department office.

Library Liaison

The Anthropology Library Liaison is Silke Higgins, Silke.Higgins@sjsu.edu.

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

1. Participation (6%, 15 points). This includes participation in class discussions and sundry in-class exercises, and it assumes you are completing the readings as required and are here on time. The class is organized as a single, integrated research team and such teams demand the participation of all their members. It is difficult to participate if you appear infrequently. Furthermore, things do not always unfold as planned on tidy syllabi, especially in a course built around real world research experiences. *You are responsible for any changes in dates or assignments that are announced in class. If you miss class, email or phone the instructor within a 48 hour window before or after you have missed class.*
2. Data Exercises (60%, 150 points). Here is the core of the course. Each student will complete three exercises that will sharpen your mastery of ethnographic data collection methods. Detailed descriptions of each assignment will be distributed as per the class calendar. They are as follows:
 - Participant Observation Exercise (15%, 40 points). Each student will conduct a participant observation at a site within the research area; your choice with approval of the instructor. This involves extensive note taking and then analysis of your description. *Submit one hardcopy report describing and analyzing the experiences and one to the [Project Prepared](#) Google drive.*

- Semistructured Interviews (30%, 80 points). Each student will conduct two semistructured interviews with a single person, and transcribe and analyze it. *Submit three hardcopies of the interview (one will be graded and returned) and an electronic copy of each to the [Project Prepared](#) Google Drive. Two hardcopies will be available for other students to read.*
- Domain and Theme Analysis (20%, 50 points). Each student will read at least 10 interviews conducted by other students and analyze them for basic cross-cutting cultural domains and themes. *Submit one hard copy and an electronic copy to the [Project Prepared](#) Google Drive. One will be graded and returned; the other will be retained by the instructor.*

3. Reflective Essay Exam (15%, 40 points). You will answer one of three essay questions in this take-home exam, linking best practices in the readings and lectures with your own experiences and reflections in designing ethnography. The essay will be submitted through Canvas. It is the only electronic file to be submitted through Canvas in our course. *All other files will be uploaded to the common Project Prepared Google Drive.*

Final Examination or Evaluation

4. Final Culminating Presentation (15%, 40 points). Each student will join a group that is responsible for developing, documenting and presenting an assessment of the Hensley and Japantown neighborhoods relative to disaster preparedness. *Submit one analysis/assessment plan per team as per the instructions we agree upon with the San Jose and Japantown Prepared.* We will meet to present the plans during the final exam period. This is a group endeavor and late materials cannot be accepted.

Grading Information

Materials submitted for grade must conform to the following minimal requirements.

Use margins of 1" all around on good quality, clean white paper. Text must be clear, dark, and clean.

Use the Society for Applied Anthropology format, especially when citing references. It can be found on our Canvas site and <https://www.sfaa.net/publications/human-organization/authors/style/>. You can see examples of this style in the two articles you are reading from *Human Organization*.

Finally, you must submit work with fewer than five mechanical (spelling, punctuation, grammar) error and return it to you ungraded. You can use Grammarly.com or your word processing program to monitor these errors in advance. You must revise the paper, eliminate all such errors and resubmit it for grade. There will be no penalty for the first revision, but a 10% reduction in grade on any second revisions, and an additional 10% on the third revision. Your work represents the University and the Department, as well as your own reputation. Work hard to maintain these high standards.

Each assignment must conform to the protocol that describes it. Note that you must submit both a hard copy and digital version of your transcribed interview, which will be uploaded to the Project Prepared Google Drive.

Your work will be assessed based on your effort and reasoning, as illustrated by your writing. Your assignments document your mastery of the skills critical to ethnographic inquiry. Rubrics and modeling will be provided to assist you in your efforts. Assignments must be submitted as per the class calendar unless discussed with the instructors in advance. Even then, late papers may be penalized. *The most important assignment to complete on schedule is the Interview Exercise, since the interviews will be read by other students in class.*

No extra credit is available.

Determination of Grades

A+ 98>, A 94-97, A- 90-93

An "A" demonstrates originality, not merely efficient memory, addresses the tasks effectively, shows effective organization and logical argumentation, uses clear, appropriate and accurate examples and a high level of writing competence and knowledge. Completes the task and consistently does extra work that is self-initiated.

B+ 88-89, B 84-87, B- 80-83

A "B" may show a good level of competence and may even reflect exactly what was discussed in class and texts, but does not contribute original knowledge. It shows uneven development of tasks. Work may be generally well organized, use appropriate examples, display facility in argumentation, with a few gaps, and demonstrates a good level of writing and knowledge. Completes the task and does some extra work guided by the instructor.

C+ 78-79, C 74-77, C- 70-73

A "C" may show a fair level of competence, but may be uneven. Work will address the task adequately, but only with parts of the task. It is adequately organized and may occasionally use examples. Argumentation may be inconsistent and writing and knowledge competence may be unclear. Language may be inappropriately informal in parts of assignment.

D+ 68-69, D 64-67, D- 60-63, F < 60

A "D" will demonstrate poor competence with inadequate organization, task and argumentation development and inappropriate examples. It will display difficulty in using adequate academic language and errors in knowledge will be in evidence. A failure will only occur if no effort is made to address the question or topic.

Classroom Protocol

Collaborative participation is critical in ethnography. Your classroom demeanor should be professional, as should be your actions in the field. You may bring devices to class, but they should only be used in class activities and work. Do not have open windows that do not pertain to the course, and make sure your mobile devices are set to silent. Distracted and inappropriate behavior that disrupts the class will not be tolerated.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Anth 149 Ethnographic Methods, Fall 2016

Fall 2016 Course Calendar

The tentative course calendar includes assignment due dates, exam discussion and due dates, and the date of final culminating activity, subject to change with fair notice. The schedule is subject to change with fair notice and announcements will be made on Canvas and/or by mySJSU notification.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/25	Syllabus, project overview and class structure
2	8/30	Introduction to ethnography, Ethnography in anthropology Read Chapters: LeCompte 1-4; Schensul 1-2; Bestor excerpt Optional Reading: Galman (graphic textbook) 1-4
	9/1	Ethnography and research design, reinventing urban ethnography
3	9/6	Project Prepared Visit #1: Introducing the project Read Chapters: LeCompte 6; Schensul 3-4; Casagrande et al.; Faas Optional Reading: Galman 5 ½-6
	9/8	Participant observation and note taking PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION EXERCISE DISTRIBUTED
4	9/13	Participant observation and note taking; Read Chapters: Schensul 5-7; Emerson et al. 1-2; Boellstorff et al. excerpt
	9/15	Distinguishing research and interview questions QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTIVE ESSAY PROVIDED 9/15
5	9/20	Interviewing (continued) ; developing questions: a mini-workshop Read Chapters: Schensul 10
	9/22	REFLECTIVE ESSAY EXAM DUE 9/22
6	9/27	Practice interviewing; ethical inquiry Read Chapters: LeCompte 10 Optional Reading: Galman 5-6
	9/29	Reviewing the instruments SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEW DISTRIBUTED
7	10/4	Structured interviewing Read Chapters: Schensul 8

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
	10/6	PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION EXERCISE DUE 10/6
8	10/11	Coding and analysis Read Chapters: LeCompte 7; Schensul 2; Emerson 8 Optional Reading: Galman 7-8
	10/13	Coding and analysis continued
9	10/18	Structured observation Read Chapters: Schensul 9
	10/20	Structured observation continued
10	10/25	Ethical practices in communities Project Prepared Visit #2: The Concept of Neighborhood Asset Assessment
	10/27	SEMISTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS DUE DATA ANALYSIS EXERCISE DISTRIBUTED
11	11/1	Workshop: supervised group interview reading time
	11/3	Workshop: supervised group interview reading time
12	11/8	Workshop: supervised group interview reading time Read: LeCompte 8, Emerson 8, 9 (pp. 251-272)
	11/10	Workshop: supervised group interview reading time
13	11/15	Divergence: Brainstorming features, assets, challenges and drivers
	11/17	NO CLASS 11/17 (American Anthropological Association Meeting), work on your Interview Analysis Exercise.
14	11/22	Convergence: Selecting themes and forming presentation teams NEIGHBORHOOD ASSET ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED INTERVIEW ANALYSIS EXERCISE DUE 11/22
	11/24	NO CLASS 11/24, Happy Thanksgiving
15	11/29	Team Work: Developing the Neighborhood Asset Assessment Project Prepared Visit #3: Feedback on the Interpretive Plans
	12/1	Asset Assessments continued
16	12/6	Incorporating the Feedback, final touches
	12/8	Course synthesis, and knowing your skills How has your elevator speech changed because of this course?