

San José State University
Department of Anthropology
College of Social Sciences
ANTH 149, Ethnographic Methods, Section 01, Fall, 2020

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	A.J. Faas, Ph.D.
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Office Hours:	Mondays and Wednesdays, 3-5pm via Zoom (link on Canvas)
Class Days/Time:	Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30-2:45pm
Classroom:	Online, Synchronous
Prerequisites:	ANTH 11 or instructor permission

Course Format

Technology

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

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://sjtu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [MySJSU](#) at <http://my.sjtu.edu> 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.

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 fieldwork and 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.

In this semester, we will be investigating social support and mutual aid among SJSU undergraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our general focus will be on the types of support people provided and received during the pandemic. This can be social support, or exchanges of materials, information, and emotional support between individuals; or mutual aid, by which we mean collective efforts of support and action. We will be conducting data collection and analysis, in order to improve and inform our understanding of how cooperation works in disasters and pandemics. 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

LeCompte, Margaret D., and Jean J. Schensul. 2010. *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research, 2nd Edition*. New York: Altamira Press.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, 2nd Edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Other Readings (Available Through Canvas)

D'Andrade, Roy. 1995. "Moral Models in Anthropology." *Current Anthropology* 36(3):399-408.

Faas, A.J. 2018. "Reading is Re-reading, or Brother, Must I Be So Dense?" *Remarks from Discussion at 2018 Society for Applied Anthropology Roundtable* "Culture and Disaster Action Network: What Can We Learn about Culture from Practitioners' Stories about their Work on Disasters?"

Faas, A.J. .2017. *Enduring Cooperation: Time, Discipline, and Minga Practice in Disaster-induced Displacement and Resettlement in the Ecuadorian Andes*. *Human Organization* 76(2):99-108.

Faas, A.J., and Eric C. Jones. 2017. "Social Network Analysis of Individuals in Hazards and Disasters." In *Social Network Analysis of Disaster Response, Recovery, and Adaptation*, edited by Eric C. Jones and A.J. Faas, 11-24. New York: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Ryan, Gery M., and H. Russell Bernard. 2003. "Techniques to Identify Themes." *Field Methods* 15:85-109.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1995. "The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology." *Current Anthropology* 36(3):409-420.

Other technology requirements & equipment

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. Additionally, students will be able to avail themselves of audio transcription software and tools in the WSQ 004 and CL 469 Ethnographic Labs.

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>. Download the guidelines for the course assignments. Read the guidelines carefully to ensure that you complete course assignments according to instructions. All assignments and exams must be completed in order to pass. ***I will not accept late assignments nor will I administer makeup exams unless documents can be presented as evidence of illness, death in family, jury duty, recognized religious observance, etc.***

1. **Participation** (10 percent of final grade). This includes participation in class discussions and various in-class exercises, and it assumes you are completing the readings as required and arrive 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. You are expected to be respectful of other students, the professor, and opinions, be mindful and courteous in your participation, and avoid dominating discussions. 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, please contact another student for notes and see visit the instructor during office hours if you need assistance.*

2. **Data Exercises** (60 percent of final grade). Here is the core of the course. Each student will complete four exercises that will sharpen your mastery of ethnographic data collection methods. Detailed descriptions of each assignment will be distributed per the class calendar. They are as follows:
 - a. **Observation Exercise** (10 percent of final grade). Each student will conduct two hours of participant observation of a site or behavior that has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Planned sites or behaviors are subject to the approval of the instructor (you will submit your plans on a Google Sheet).
 - i. This will likely entail multiple instances of participant observation (e.g., a visit to the supermarket will likely take only 30 minutes, so you would document four visits).
 - ii. Please note that this exercise does not require you to put yourself into situations that are any more risky than situations in your normal life (e.g., going to the grocery store) and alternative exercises will be made available for students who cannot participate in this level of observation given their current or pre-existing circumstances (e.g., medical, familial).
 - iii. When performing observations for the course, you are expected to adhere to the health and safety requirements set forth by the Santa Clara County Public Health Department in response to COVID-19.
 - iv. This involves extensive fieldnote taking.
 - v. Submit your complete fieldnotes to the Project Google Drive using the title YOURLASTNAME_Observation.Fieldnotes_MMDDYY
 - vi. Submit a report describing and analyzing the experiences and one to the Project Google Drive. **Detailed instructions for the report are available on Canvas.** The electronic report should be saved using the title YOURLASTNAME_Observation.Exercise_MMDDYY.
 - b. **Screener surveys** (10 percent of final grade). Each student will recruit 6 students from outside the class to complete online screener surveys.
 - c. **Semi-structured Interviews** (20 percent of final grade). Each student will conduct two ethnographic interviews with SJSU students and transcribe and analyze them.
 - i. Submit the recordings and transcripts of each to the Project Google Drive.
 - d. **Analytical Paper** - Domain and Theme Analysis (20 percent of final grade). Each student will read at least 10 interviews conducted by other students and analyze them for basic, cross-cutting domains and themes.
 - i. Detailed instructions are available on Canvas.
 - ii. Submit electronic copy to Project Google Drive.
 - iii. One will be graded and returned; the other will be retained by the instructor. The electronic report should be saved using the title YOURLASTNAME_Domain.Analysis_MMDDYY
3. **Reflective Essay Exam** (15 percent of final grade). You will answer 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 essays will be submitted through Canvas.

Final Examination or Evaluation

4. Final Culminating Presentation (15 percent of final grade). Each student will join a group that is responsible for developing, documenting, and presenting an analysis of trends in care practices and/or healthcare seeking. *Present one, 15-minute presentation per team per the instructions we agree upon.* We will meet to

present during the final exam period. This is a group endeavor and late materials cannot be accepted. Students will receive individual grades.

Formatting & Grading Information

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

- Use Times New Roman, 12-point font, 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 errors (spelling, punctuation, grammar) or it will be returned 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 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.

No extra credit is available.

Determination of Grades

A plus 98>, A 94-97, A minus 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 plus 88-89, B 84-87, B minus 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 plus 78-79, C 74-77, C minus 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 plus 68-69, D 64-67, D minus 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

1. It is expected that students will be attentive and respectful of their fellow students, the instructor and cultures and traditions which are not their own.
2. Students arriving habitually late to class will be asked to leave as this is disruptive to the learning process.
3. **Mobile phones, laptops, and tablets must be turned off during class and must be out of sight or else the instructor will ask the student to leave for the remainder of the class meeting.**
4. Students may record lectures for their own private use only, **not to be redistributed or sold.**
5. Students are required to read SJSU's Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 (see below). **This university policy on plagiarism and cheating will be strictly honored.**
6. In the event that the building is evacuated because of an emergency during class time, the class will convene in the parking lot directly adjacent to the building. No assignment will be canceled because of any such emergency.
7. If you send me a seriously cool picture of Audre Lorde by August 28, I will add 2 points extra credit to your reflective essay exam.
8. If you miss a class, ask your fellow students for copies of their notes. If you need further help, please see me in my office hours.
9. Students are responsible for being aware of exam dates and assignment deadlines.
10. If you have any concerns about your class performance or comprehension, see me in my office hours or schedule an appointment. I am always willing to help students and I care about whether students are grasping the material and enjoying the class.

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](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>"

ANTH 149 Ethnographic Methods, Fall 2020, Course Schedule

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.

Readings marked with an ** are available on Canvas.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Wednesday, 08/19	<i>Syllabus, Project Overview and Class Structure</i>
2	Monday, 08/24	<i>Introduction to Ethnography, Ethnography in Anthropology</i> Reading <i>Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research</i> , Chapters 1-4
2	Wednesday, 08/26	<i>Ethnography and Research Design</i> Reading Schensul and LeCompte (2013) Essential Data Collection** Schensul and LeCompte (2013) Defining and Entering the Field**
3	Monday, 08/31	<i>Introducing the Project: Social Support & Mutual Aid in Disaster</i> Reading Faas (2017) <i>Enduring Cooperation: Time, Discipline, and Minga Practice in Disaster-induced Displacement and Resettlement in the Ecuadorian Andes</i> ** Faas and Jones (2017) <i>Social Network Analysis of Individuals in Hazards and Disasters</i> ** Screener Survey Assignment Distributed
3	Wednesday, 09/02	<i>Introducing the Project, Part II</i> Reading <i>Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research</i> , Chapter 6
4	Monday, 09/07	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
4	Wednesday, 09/09	<i>Participant Observation and Note Taking, Part I</i> Reading Emerson et al., chapters 1-2 Participant observation exercise distributed
5	Monday, 09/14	<i>Participant Observation and Note Taking, Part II</i> Reading Schensul and LeCompte (2013), Recording and Organizing Ethnographic Field Data**

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
5	Wednesday, 09/16	<p><i>Participant Observation and Note Taking, Part III</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> Schensul and LeCompte (2013), Participant Observation and Informal Interviewing**</p>
6	Monday, 09/21	<p><i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Part I</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> Emerson et al., chapter 3</p> <p><i>Questions for Reflective Essay Distributed</i></p>
6	Wednesday, 09/23	<p><i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Part II</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> Emerson et al., chapter 4</p> <p><i>In-Class Workshop: Practice Interviewing</i> <i>Screener Surveys Due (i.e., all surveys must be completed by this date)</i></p>
7	Monday, 09/28	<p><i>Sampling</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> Schensul and LeCompte (2013), Sampling in Ethnographic Research**</p> <p><i>Reflective Essay Due in Class</i></p>
7	Wednesday, 09/30	<p><i>Distinguishing Research and Interview Questions</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> Schensul and LeCompte (2013), In-Depth, Open-Ended Exploratory Interviewing**</p>
8	Monday, 10/05	<p><i>Reviewing the Instruments</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> Schensul and LeCompte (2013), Semi-Structured Interviews**</p> <p><i>In-Class Workshop: Practice Interviewing</i> <i>Semi-structured Interview Distributed</i></p>
8	Wednesday, 10/07	<p><i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Part III</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> Emerson et al., chapter 5</p> <p><i>In-Class Workshop: Practice Interviewing</i> <i>Participant Observation Exercise Due in Class</i></p>
9	Monday, 10/12	<p><i>Ethics, Part I</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research, Chapter 10</p>
9	Wednesday, 10/14	<p><i>Coding and Analysis, Part I</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research, Chapter 7</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
10	Monday, 10/19	Coding and Analysis, Part II Reading Emerson et al., chapter 6
10	Wednesday, 10/21	Structured Observation In-Class Workshop: Mapping, documenting interactions and practices
11	Monday, 10/26	Ethics, Part II Reading Scheper-Hughes (1995) <i>The Primacy of the Ethical</i> (pp. 409-420)**
11	Wednesday, 10/28	Ethics, Part III Analytical Paper Assignment Distributed and Reviewed Semi-structured Interviews Due
12	Monday, 11/02	Workshop: Supervised Group Interview Reading Time Reading <i>Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research</i> , Chapter 8
12	Wednesday, 11/04	Workshop: Supervised Group Interview Reading Time Reading Emerson et al., Chapter 7
13	Monday, 11/09	Workshop: Supervised Group Interview Reading Time Reading Emerson et al., Chapter 8
13	Wednesday, 11/11	NO CLASS MEETING – VETERAN’S DAY
14	Monday, 11/16	Workshop: Supervised Group Interview Reading Time
14	Wednesday, 11/18	Divergence: Brainstorming Analytical Themes and Domains Reading Faas (2018) <i>Reading is Re-reading, or Brother, must I be so dense?</i> **
15	Monday, 11/23	Convergence: Selecting Themes and Forming Presentation Teams Who's working on what themes? In-Class Workshop: Forming Presentation Teams
15	Wednesday, 11/25	NO CLASS MEETING – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
16	Monday, 11/30	Presentation Workshop, Part I In-Class Workshop: Final Presentations Analytical Papers Due
16	Wednesday, 12/02	Presentation Workshop, Part II
17	Monday, 12/07	Course Debrief
Final Exam	Tuesday, 12/15	12:15 to 2:30pm on Zoom