COURSE DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS:

This course is designed to give students a working familiarity with the tools of ethnographic research and the techniques of research design. Individually or in groups, students will identify a field site and a meaningful topic in the Portland area. Within this context, students will apply theoretical knowledge to practical research, and will explore various research methods of the discipline. Final projects will require students to write a detailed proposal for a hypothetical research project based on preliminary research performed during the quarter.

Class readings and discussions will focus not only on research methods but also on ethical and theoretical considerations surrounding ethnographic fieldwork and writing. By the end of the class students should feel confident initiating contacts in a field site; obtaining information through a variety of research methods; recording and analyzing data; and crafting proposals for future research and funding.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: At least 8 previous credits in Sociocultural Anthropology courses. Anthropology 304 and 305 or similar theory courses strongly recommended. Students who lack these prerequisites are advised to wait to take this course.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Additional readings on D2L. Students can access D2L with their Odin account. If you do not have an Odin account, you can sign up to get one at https://www.account.pdx.edu. Please contact the instructor if you encounter difficulties in accessing this resource.

OPTIONAL RESOURCES ON RESERVE AT PSU LIBRARY:
Anthropology.
Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 2005. The SAGE handbook of qualitative research. (Available in late February)

CLASS REQUIREMENTS:
Class periods will be used to discuss reading assignments and individual student projects; class attendance and participation are essential and required. Unexcused late assignments will be graded down one half grade per calendar day; all assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade. Students with a documented disability needing accommodation should immediately inform the instructor.

Final evaluation will be based on:

- 5 exercises: 10% each 50%
- Research Proposal 30%
- Class Participation 20%

Students taking this course for graduate credit will be held to higher standards in completing the above assignments and are also required to write an additional 12-15 page research paper that focuses on one particular type of ethnographic research methodology. This will count for 30% of the final grade.

Plagiarism (intellectual theft) is a very serious academic offense. Any assignment containing plagiarized material will receive a failing grade. You are responsible for reading and understanding the department handout on plagiarism which is available on the D2L Site for this course. Please ask the instructor or a tutor at the Writing Center if you have any questions.

COURSE OUTLINE:
Jan. 9 Course Introduction

11 What is Ethnography?
   H&A Chapter 1

13 Research Design I

16 Martin Luther King Holiday. No Class.
Research Design II

H&A Chapter 2


Discuss tentative student projects

STT 2; 7; 26

Peruse former student projects before this class (see folder in my mailbox in Cramer 141)

Jan. 23

Access

H&A Chapter 3; STT 3; 4; 8; 11

Field Relations

H&A Chapter 4; STT 5; 6; 10

Mass Media Research: Connecting Research Topics to Theory to Method: A Malaysian Example

Exercise #1 Research Topics Due

Observation: Proxemics & Maps


Feb. 1

Fieldnotes


Ethics in Field Research

Read: H&A Chapter 10; STT 24, 25

Ethical Dilemmas

AAA Statement of Ethics & El Dorado Report Findings (including Referendum to Rescind). D2L

Be prepared to defend or critique this report in class discussion.

Discuss Observation & Analysis Findings

Exercise #2 Due

Asking Questions and Interviewing

H&A Chapter 5

Counting and Sampling

Visual Research Methods


Feb. 17 Discuss Interview Exercise
Exercise #3 Due

20 Utilizing Documents
H&A Chapter 6

22 Guest Speaker: TBA
H&A Chapter 7

24 Analysis
H&A Chapter 8
Exercise #4 Due

27 Writing Research Proposals
Read: Elements of a Proposal

29 Research Issues and Challenges. Discuss student projects.

March 2 Writing Ethnography
H&A Chapter 9; STT 22, 29

March 5 Discuss Preliminary Analysis
Exercise #5 Due

March 7-14 Research Proposal Presentations. Students will deliver a formal 8 minute PowerPoint presentation of their research project that briefy follows the format of their final proposal, emphasizing especially the key questions raised (and why they are important); the main theories employed; the methods of data collection used; and the expected modes of data analysis. The report should also mention the proposed time frame and budget. A short question-and-answer period will follow each presentation with students providing critical and supportive
feedback on each others’ presentations. (This presentation will count as 20% of your research proposal grade.)

Final Proposals due.

Exercise #1 Research Topic Statement (Jan. 27)

Submit a one page statement of your tentative research site and topic with at least three key questions that you hope to research. Identify four relevant sources of written information for this project, one of which must be an article from Annual Review of Anthropology that is relevant to your topic. Submit these references in proper bibliographic form with short annotations that specify why you believe these references will be useful.

Students should not select groups/topics with which they have a personal involvement/connection. The following topics are not permitted: online communities; pornographic/sexual/drug-related topics; communities with restricted access such as prisons, military, etc.

Exercise #2 Description and Analysis (Feb. 8)

Select a place that is relevant to your intended research project and describe and analyze events in this place during a 30 minute period of time (or longer if necessary). You should focus especially on people, social interactions, and contextual details that are relevant to your research questions. Be as detailed as possible in your observations. Try to clearly distinguish between description and analysis.

Include a sketch map of the location with relevant information on key features. Be sure to include orientation; an indication of the scale used; a key or legend; date of the map.

Your report on this exercise may be anywhere from three to five pages in length.

Exercise #3 Informant Interview (Feb. 17)

Design and conduct either a formal or informal interview that will be of some relevance to your research project. If this is a short list of questions, you may want to interview more than one person. You may be as structured or as unstructured as you want, but in your report you should justify the approach you have chosen.

Your report should describe the interview(s) and analyze the results. This should include how what you have learned in the interview affects the ongoing development of your research questions and plan. Reports should be somewhere between four and five pages in length with at least one full page of analysis.

Exercise #4 Annotated Bibliography (Feb. 24)
Prepare an annotated bibliography of at least ten articles or books of both topical and theoretical relevance (minimum 4 of each) to your project. Remember that this is an anthropological research project, so you will need to include citations from anthropological perspectives and research. Annotations should consist of a few sentences that summarize the main ideas in the publication as they relate to the key questions of your project. Be specific about the application of these ideas and theories to your study. Students working on a common project may share bibliographic materials but should prepare their own annotations. This bibliography will be used to help write your ‘review of the literature’ section in your final proposal. Be sure to follow correct bibliographic citation format.

Exercise #5 Preliminary Analysis of Data (March 5)

Select a particular question relevant to your larger research project, and based on what you have learned so far, provide a preliminary answer to this question.

In a 4 page essay, briefly discuss your field site and the specific question(s) you address. Describe your theoretical approach to the question (include citations of specific theoretical materials that you are drawing on) and explain your choice of methodologies to gather data on the topic. (Possible methods include: participant observation, interviews, surveys, studies of proxemics, maps, archival research, photography, etc.) (1-2 pages)

Describe the data you have gathered to answer your question, and identify concepts/analytical categories that help make sense of what you have learned so far. Be careful to specify what you data can and cannot tell you. (The most important part of this assignment is this analysis: 2-3 pages.) Be sure to include a list of references at the end.

Final Research Proposal (due Tuesday, March 20, 10 am)

Students working in groups must write their own individual proposals. Abstract, budget, schedule, and bibliography are not included in the page-count. The proposal will require as much research and writing as a term paper. The final proposal (10-12 pages in length) will consist of:

- **Title and Abstract:** 200-word summary of proposed research.
- **Statement of Purpose:** a statement of the major hypothesis/questions of the proposed research, and the importance of the research to the local and/or scholarly community.
- **Review of the literature:** discussion of existing materials related to the topic, location, and theories you will use in your research.
• **Research Site:** a description of the field site and availability of data.

• **Research Design:** a detailed and explicit description of methods to be used.

• **Ethical Considerations:** a statement of ethical issues that you need to respond to in data collection, analysis, and reporting.

• **Significance of the data:** a guide to how you will interpret and analyze the data collected. (If I find x, it means y; if I find p, it means q.)

• **Conclusion:** Reiterate why your proposal should receive funding.

• **Bibliography** of sources important to the research topic.

• **Budget** of anticipated expenses.

• **Schedule** of anticipated activities.