Welcome Letter (January 2017)

Dear Students,

Welcome to EER 7880, a graduate class on the Fundamentals of Ethnographic Research. Thank you so much for choosing to be in this class this semester.

Put simply, ethnography is the study of culture. Even though this definition contains few words, it simultaneously holds many possibilities within it—most of which are not so simple after all. I think that is part of what makes ethnography so interesting. Like culture itself, ethnography is complex, nuanced, thought-provoking, and constantly changing. It is a field marked not only by traditions that have held over time, but also by some of the most exciting and innovative turns in methodological thinking. I really enjoy ethnography, and hope you will, too.

In this course, we will focus on becoming ethnographic. In other words, it could be argued that ethnography is not something that we turn on and off—it can be a way of thinking that encourages us to be present in the world. It is a set of habits and skills that, once we build them, can stay with us. Ethnography helps us to pay more attention to the world in which we live, both in relation to the places we travel and the places in which we already are. Ethnography helps us to better understand those around us, and, in the process, to better understand ourselves.

The first portion of this class will emphasize doing ethnography. We will learn how to do some of the mainstays of ethnographic research, such as participant observations, fieldnotes, and interviews. We will practice designing ethnographic projects of interest in educational settings. We will keep research journals, and we will carefully attend to ethics in fieldwork along the way.

After that, the second portion of the class will take a particular interest in everyday ethnography. We will begin this segment by taking up what some might call a Slow philosophy. Although we will talk more later about what it is, what it means, and why it can be useful in research, for now, I want to share a couple of brief quotes for you to potentially start thinking with:

“Sometimes you have to pause to catch up with where you already are.”
(Kathleen Stewart, Ordinary Affects, 2007, p. 63)

“If we think we already know what is out there, we will almost surely miss much of it.”
(Jane Bennett, Vibrant Matter, 2010, p. xv)

We will then consider how other forms of ethnography intersect with the everyday, including those that are multimodal, sensory, place-based, and critical. And, in the process, we might find ourselves not only adopting ethnographic techniques in this particular course, but in our research experiences yet-to-come.

I am looking forward to a wonderful semester with you all.

Warm regards,
Jasmine B. Ulmer
EER 7880: Fundamentals of Ethnographic Research

* Please do not bring peanuts or peanut-products to class. *

Course Description in Graduate Bulletin:

EER 7880: Fundamentals of Ethnographic Research. Cr. 3. Collecting, analyzing, and writing up findings from ethnographic data (participant-observation field notes, interviews, and artifacts); issues of rigor in naturalistic research in education.

Course Information

Semester: Winter 2017  
Ref. no.: 26861  
Location: 55 Education Building  
Dates/Times: Monday, 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.  
Instructor: Dr. Jasmine Ulmer, Assistant Professor  
Division: Theoretical and Behavioral Foundations  
Program: Educational Evaluation and Research  
Unit: College of Education, Wayne State University

Contact Information

Office Hours: by appointment, Monday afternoons  
Office: 5425 Gullen Mall #347  
Phone: 313-577-1427  
Email: jasmine.ulmer@wayne.edu

Course Outcomes

• Students will be able to describe traditional ethnographic inquiry methodologies.  
• Students will be able to describe contemporary ethnographic inquiry methodologies.  
• Students will be able to develop ethnographic habits in everyday life.  
• Students will be able to design a potential ethnographic study.  
• Students will be able to propose future research goals and interests.
## Tentative Course Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings and Journal Prompts</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Readings:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>Applied ethnography</td>
<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Bring cultural artifact</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Chapter 1: What is ethnography? (LeCompte &amp; Schensul, 2010)</td>
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<td>• Chapter 2: When, where, and by whom should ethnography be used? (LeCompte &amp; Schensul, 2010)</td>
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<td>Journal prompts:</td>
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<td>• How did you choose your artifact? Why? How does it relate to (your) culture?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/30</td>
<td>Applied ethnography</td>
<td>Readings:</td>
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<td>• Chapter 3: Paradigms for framing the research of ethnographic research (LeCompte &amp; Schensul, 2010)</td>
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<td>• Chapter 4: An overview of research design (LeCompte &amp; Schensul, 2010)</td>
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<td>Reading – educational ethnography in action:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Readings</td>
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| 4    | 2/6  | ONLINE Applied ethnography | Readings:  
- Chapter 5: Choosing and designing an ethnographic research project (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010)  
- Chapter 6: Collecting ethnographic data (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010)  
Reading – educational ethnography in action:  
| 5    | 2/13 | Applied ethnography | Readings:  
- Chapter 9: Applying ethnography (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010)  
- Chapter 10: Protection of risk to human subjects and the ethics of ethnographic fieldwork (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010)  
Reading – educational ethnography in action:  
Online assignment (submit in Blackboard)  
Bring a printed copy to class for an in-class activity |
| 6    | 2/20 | Being ethnographic and reclaiming culture through slowness | Video – a culture of slowness:  
Video – Slow food:  
- Slow Food. (2013, Sept. 20). Carlo Petrini on Slow Food and Terra Madre [Video, 4:01]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqdzvQ2wpO0  
Video – Slow cities:  
| 7 | 2/27 | Theoretical frameworks for visual ethnography | Video – Slow music:  
Reading – Slow methodology:  
Readings:  
- Readings on photographic theory and everyday life. Selected excerpts.  
Journal prompts:  
- Have you found concepts and/or theorists that might inform your research? If so, describe. If not, what sorts of concepts and/or theorists might be a good fit? |
| 8 | 3/6 | Multimodal ethnography (& walking) | Reading:  
- Ingold, T. (2010). Footprints through the weather-world: Walking, breathing, knowing. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 16(s1), S121–S139.  
Website exhibit:  

Article review, Part 2
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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Further readings, podcasts, and web-based resources:  
- Chapter 1 – Introduction: (Re)thinking about everyday life (Pink, 2012)  
- Chapter 2 – Theorising the familiar: Practices and places (Pink, 2012)  
- Chapter 3 – Researching practices, places, and representations: Methodologies (Pink, 2012)  
Videos:  
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| 11   | 4/3  | Everyday ethnography | Choose at least one chapter to read:  
- Chapter 4 – Beyond doing the dishes: Putting kitchen practices in place (Pink, 2012)  
- Chapter 5 – Making the sensory home: Laundry routes and energy flows (Pink, 2012)  
- Chapter 6 – Tracing neighborhood flows: Making a garden place (Pink, 2012)  
Reading:  
- Chapter 9 – Conclusions (Pink, 2012)  
Journal prompt:  
- Based on the chapter you choose (4, 5, 6), document how you move through similar spaces. Write, draw, map, chart, or use other data collection strategies. |
| 12   | 4/10 | Post-critical ethnography | Readings on post-critical ethnography (to prepare for guest lecture by Dr. Jessica Lester, Indiana University):  
| 13   | 4/17 | Spotlight on recent graduate work: Ethnography with children | An ethnographic dissertation:  
| 14   | 4/24 | Presentations | -- |
## Grading and Assessment:

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<tr>
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<th>Notes</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class preparation and participation</td>
<td>Students will read the required course materials in advance, be prepared for class discussion, and will actively participate in other class activities. Active participation includes not using laptops, cell phones, and other technological devices during class.</td>
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| Article review, Part 1                          | Students will identify one ethnographic article of interest. The article should have been published in one of the following peer-reviewed journals:  
  - *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*  
  - *Cultural Studies ≈ Critical Methodologies*  
  - *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*  
  - *Ethnography*  
  - *Ethnography and Education*  
  - *Gender and Education*  
  - *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*  
  - *International Review of Qualitative Research*  
  - *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*  
  - *Qualitative Inquiry*  
  - *Qualitative Health Research*  
  - *Qualitative Research*  
  Notes. The article must use ethnography as a methodology. The article should use a paradigm that the student is interested in using (such as positivistic, interpretivist, critical, ecological, social-network, and other paradigms). Upload a full copy of the article into Blackboard. | 05     |
<p>| Week 4 online assignment                        | Students will respond to seven questions in the Week 4 online assignment. It is a research planning worksheet for a potential research project of interest. (Note: students do not have to conduct this research project in real life.) Upload responses into Blackboard and bring a printed copy to the next class. | 05     |
| Article review, Part 2                          | Students will select one qualitative research study from their area of interest to review (500-600 words). The review should include the following sections: 1) Objectives; 2) Conceptual or theoretical framework; 3) Methods; 4) Data sources; 5) Results; 6) Significance. Upload responses into Blackboard. | 10     |
| Everyday images and/or sounds                   | As part of an informal homework assignment, students will collect images and/or sounds from their everyday lives. The goal is to tell a research story without using text or words. Smartphone technologies are ideal for this assignment. Alternative options include collecting photographs from online archives (e.g., Detroit Public Library, WSU Libraries, Detroit Historical Society, etc.). Do not upload into Blackboard – bring images and sounds into class for an in-class activity. | 10     |</p>
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<tr>
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<th>Notes</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographic field journal</td>
<td>Students will maintain a research journal. The journal should include 1) in-class writing assignments; 2) out-of-class writing assignments; and 3) independent, spontaneous writings/thoughts/drawings/mappings/other additions added by students throughout the course of the semester. Student-led additions are designed to build ethnographic habits. Turn in journals to the instructor in class.</td>
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| Research project           | **Option 1:** Students will compose a 2,000-word (single-spaced, APA format) research proposal describing a future ethnographic project of interest. The proposed project should include the following sections: 1) Objectives; 2) Conceptual or theoretical framework; 3) Methods; 4) Data sources; 5) Results; 6) Significance. (Note. Students do not have to conduct this research project in real life.) A rubric will be provided. Submit research proposals through Blackboard.  
**Option 2:** With prior approval from the instructor via email, students will conduct a mini-ethnography and make a research-creation. Research-creations might include:  
  • photographic curations;  
  • cellphilms (ex., MacEntee, Burkholder, & Schwab-Cartas, 2016);  
  • 60-second ethnographic films (ex., Station to Station, 2015);  
  • spatial mappings (ex., Maps for a Narrative Atlas, 2013);  
  • a collection of flash fiction ethnographic writings;  
  • and/or other examples of ethnographic research. | 30     |
Course Policies

- Cell phones and other electronic devices are not to be used during class.
- Frequent tardiness, early departure, or absence will impact your grade.
- Late work will be penalized up to 10 percent per day.
- Incompletes will be given only in the case of extreme extenuating circumstances.
- Unless otherwise noted, assignments should be submitted in Blackboard before class begins at 5:00 pm. Assignments submitted after 5:00 pm will be late.

Grading System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-75</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 70</td>
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Required Materials and Texts:


3. Blank journal/notebook to be used for in-class writing assignments.
Cancellations of Class & “Snow” Policy:

If for any reason I must cancel class, I will contact students via campus email. You must determine when it is not safe to travel. We come from a variety of locations and conditions always vary, so make good decisions based on your conditions and turn around if driving is not safe. If the campus is open, I must hold class.

Religious Observance Policy:

Because of the extraordinary variety of religious affiliations represented in the University student body and staff, the Wayne State University calendar makes no provision for religious holidays. It is University policy, however, to respect the faith and religious obligations of the individual. Students who find that their classes or examinations involve conflicts with their religious observances are expected to notify their instructors well in advance so that alternative arrangements as suitable as possible may be worked out.

For Students with Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-202-4216 (video phone). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services’ mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University.

Please be aware that a delay in getting SDS accommodation letters for the current semester may hinder the availability or facilitation of those accommodations in a timely manner. Therefore, it is in your best interest to get your accommodation letters as early in the semester as possible.

Enrollment/Withdrawal Policy:

Students must add classes no later than the end of the first week of classes. This includes online classes. Students may continue to drop classes (with full tuition cancellation) through the first two weeks of the term.

Students who withdraw from a course after the end of the 5th week of class will receive a grade of WP, WF, or WN.

- WP will be awarded if the student is passing the course (based on work due to date) at the time the withdrawal is requested;
- WF will be awarded if the student is failing the course (based on work due to date) at the time the withdrawal is requested;
- WN will be awarded if no materials have been submitted, and so there is no basis for a grade;
Students must submit their withdrawal request on-line through Pipeline. The faculty member must approve the withdrawal request before it becomes final, and students should continue to attend class until they receive notification via email that the withdrawal has been approved.

Beginning the fifth week of class students are no longer allowed to drop but must withdraw from classes. The last day to withdraw will be at the end of the 10th full week of classes. The withdrawal date for courses longer or shorter than the full 15-week terms will be adjusted proportionately. See the university webpage for full details: http://reg.wayne.edu/students/information.php

**Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism:**

The College of Education has a “zero tolerance” approach to plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. (See Student Code of http://doso.wayne.edu/assets/codeofconduct.pdf). Plagiarism includes copying material (any more than 5 consecutive words) from outside texts or presenting outside information as if it were your own by not crediting authors through citations. It can be deliberate or unintended. Specific examples of academic dishonesty, including what constitutes plagiarism, can be found in the University’s Undergraduate Bulletin (http://bulletins.wayne.edu/ubk-output/index.html) and Graduate Catalog (http://www.bulletins.wayne.edu/gbk-output/index.html) under the heading “Student Ethics.” These university policies are also included as a link on Blackboard within each course in which students are enrolled. It is every student’s responsibility to read these documents to be aware which actions are defined as plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Sanctions could include failure in the course involved, probation and expulsion, so students are advised to think carefully and thoroughly, ask for help from instructors if it is needed, and make smart decisions about their academic work.

**Wayne State University Writing Center:**

The Writing Center (2nd floor, UGL) provides individual tutoring consultations free of charge for students at Wayne State University. While the center serves both graduate and undergraduate students, undergraduate students in General Education courses, including composition courses, receive priority for tutoring appointments. The Writing Center serves as a resource for writers, providing tutoring sessions on the range of activities in the writing process – considering the audience, analyzing the assignment or genre, brainstorming, researching, writing drafts, revising, editing, and preparing documentation. The Writing Center is not an editing or proofreading service; rather, students are guided as they engage collaboratively in the process of academic writing, from developing an idea to correctly citing sources. To make an appointment, consult the Writing Center website: http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing/.

To submit material for online tutoring, consult the Writing Center HOOT website (Hypertext One-on-One Tutoring) http://www.clas.wayne.edu/unit-inner.asp?WebPageID=1330.

**Wayne State University Mission:**

We will create and advance knowledge, prepare a diverse student body to thrive, and positively impact local and global communities.