

Hybrid Ethnography: Mixing Ethnography with Other Methods

Ethnography can seem from the outside like a "mushy" science. Good ethnography, however, is far from mushy. It requires careful planning with rigorous attention to detail, ample practice in support of the diligent effort, and persistence in the face of setbacks. Fieldwork is not for the faint of heart. In this course, students will learn to identify the practices that constitute "good" ethnography and the types of questions that can be answered with ethnographic research. Students will also build their toolkits of skills and strategies for fieldwork. Students will have the opportunity to practice these techniques and receive feedback from the instructor and their peers. In this course, I especially highlight course topics that I think as the core skills of being ethnographers. The course will be divided into two main themes: a) developing research questions, research design and sampling, and choosing the field sites. b) how can researchers combine ethnography with other methods, including quantitative survey, interviews, team ethnography, and digital ethnography.

This course requires timely attendance and active participation in discussions. To enrich these discussions, students must submit their pre-class assignments to both the instructor and their peers by 5 p.m. every Monday. Furthermore, each student is required to review all other students' assignments prior to class, preparing to contribute meaningful insights to the discussion. The research journey often brings with it moments of novelty, joy, and inspiration, alongside occasional challenges and frustrations. Should you ever feel overwhelmed, remember that our classroom is a supportive learning community where everyone progresses together. I look forward to embarking on this exciting journey with all of you."

Course Requirements:

- Weekly assignments and class participation (50%)
- Final thesis plan and oral presentation (50%)

Unit I: Ethnography as a Method

Week1: What is Ethnography?

Goffman, Erving. 1989. "On Fieldwork." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 18: 123-32.

Katz, Jack. (1997) "Ethnography's Warrants." *Sociological Methods & Research* 25: 391

l Purpose of the Week: In the first week, we plan to talk about what ethnography is, what are presumptions and misunderstandings about ethnography are, and the ways in which different approaches that define "ethnography." We will focus on three themes: a) What are the different approaches of ethnography, and how do they vary?

(Chicago school, Bourdieu's sociology, and ethnomethodologically oriented ethnography(grounded theory)). b) What are the similarities among these approaches that contextualize "ethnography" from a sociological point of view? C) Clarifying misunderstanding of ethnography—what does it mean to study human lives by using fieldwork? By talking about what ethnography is, we should also discuss what is not ethnography.

Course introduction: No Assignment

Week2: Ethnographic Inquiry: Addressing How and Why Questions

Alford, R. R. (1998) *The Craft Of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, Evidence*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1

Katz, J. (2001). From How to Why: On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography (Part I). *Ethnography*, 2(4), 443–473. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146613801002004001>

Katz, J. (2002). From How to Why: On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography (part 2). *Ethnography*, 3(1), 63–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138102003001003>

Purpose of the Week: Ethnography is often presumed to answer "how" questions—the question about how people understand the world and the ways in which things operate in this way and then that way. I would argue that this is not completely true. Some ethnographies do deal with "why" questions—that is, why things operate and what shapes the outcomes. How are these questions being dealt with by ethnographers?

Assignment: Crafting your ethnographic research question—write your research puzzle (one or three sentences) and explain the significance of your research question. Write a brief paragraph about whether you are asking "why" or "how" questions, how to turn "how" questions into "why" questions and vice versa, and different hypothetical answers to your questions.

Week3: Immersing Yourself into the "Fields"

Orum, Anthony and Joe Feagin, "A Tale of Two Cases"

Burawoy, Michael. 2009. *The extended case method : four countries, four decades, four great transformations, and one theoretical tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Burawoy, Michael. 1988. "The extended case method." *Sociological theory* 16(1):4-33.

Supplementary: Access and Positionality in the Field

Seim, Josh. 2021. "Participant Observation, Observant Participation, and Hybrid Ethnography." *Sociological Methods & Research*:0049124120986209.

Reyes, Victoria. 2018. "Ethnographic toolkit: Strategic positionality and researchers' visible and invisible tools in field research." *Ethnography* 21(2):220-40.

Purpose of the week: In the week3, we move from research questions to research practices. We will discuss how to choose the field site that answers your research questions and several ways to define a "field." We will discuss the single site, multi-sited fieldwork, as well as comparative ethnography. We will focus on different ways of defining cases that help to shed light on research puzzles.

Assignment: Finding your field site and gaining access—write one paragraph describing your field site and identify three ways to gain access, who you approach, which types of access you get, and the limitations of each access.

Week4: Fieldnotes and Data Collection

Trouille, David, and Iddo Tavory. 2016. "Shadowing: Warrants for Intersituational Variation in Ethnography." *Sociological Methods & Research* 48(3):534-60.

Lareau, Annette. 2021. *Listening to People: A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing it All Up*: University of Chicago Press. Ch6, Learning to Do Participant Observation

1 Purpose of the week: Unveiling the messy data collection processes

1 Assignment: Write two pages, single spaces, documenting your descriptive and analytical memos. In the descriptive memo, you need to shadow or jot down every detail about social interactions you have observed. (We will talk about do we really need to write "everything" and whether we can really do that in creating a field note). Thereafter, in the analytical memo, you need to write some analytical themes from your descriptive social interactions.

Week 5: Establish Rapport, Trust, and Research Ethics

Goffman, Alice. 2014. *On the run: fugitive life in an American city*. Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press.

Alice Goffman's responses to accusations from a law professor (Link attached).

Law professor's accuses (See article attached)

Discussing Goffman's research ethic cases. Does she violate research ethics? If so, from whose point of view? If not, why? How do we understand research ethics, and as time goes by, how do researchers make their ethical decisions?

I Purpose of the week: In week5, we plan to discuss research ethics and the many ethical judgments that ethnographers have to make during their research procedures. While IRB views research ethnic as a one-time process, research ethics are a continuous process in which researchers build trust, establish rapport, as well as reflect researchers' power positions. We will use cases to discuss how researchers deal with ethnic, from accessing the field, building trust, and maintaining confidentiality, as well to writing it out to publicize stories.

I Assignment: No assignment. If you plan to conduct your own research, try to attend IRB office hours and training by yourself.

Week6: Theorizing Ethnographic Data

Timmermans, Stefan, and Iddo Tavory. 2012. "Theory Construction in Qualitative Research." *Sociological theory* 30(3):167-86.

Jessica Calarco, 2022, Keynote Speech, *Back-forward Science*, Chicago Ethnography Conference.

Vila-Henninger, Luis, Claire Dupuy, Virginie Van Ingelgom, Mauro Caprioli, Ferdinand Teuber, Damien Pennetreau, Margherita Bussi, and Cal Le Gall. 2022. "Abductive Coding: Theory Building and Qualitative (Re)Analysis." *Sociological Methods & Research*.

See supplementary syllabus: Mustafa Emirbayer, Ethnography as Theory, Theorizing as Ethnography.

I Purpose of the week: I plan to devote two weeks to discussing how to theorize ethnographic data, given that one of the hardest parts is theorizing ethnographic data. In particular, how do we know that we are making "consistent" arguments in the ethnographic work?

Week7: Writing it Up: Show it, Don't Tell

Mitchell Duneier, Sidewalk

Elliot Liebow, Tally's Corner

Unit II: Ethnography as a Collaborative Endeavor

Week8: Mixing Ethnography with Survey Questionnaire

Desmond, M. (2016). *Evicted: Poverty and profit in the American city*. Crown.

Week 9: Mixed Methods and Interviews

Lareau, Annette. 2021. *Listening to People: A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing it All Up*: University of Chicago Press.

Jerolmack, Colin, and Shamus Khan. "Talk is cheap: Ethnography and the attitudinal fallacy." *Sociological Methods & Research* 43.2 (2014): 178-209.

DiMaggio, Paul. 2014. "Comment on Jerolmack and Khan." *Sociological Methods and Research* 43 (2): 232-235.

Week 10: Team Ethnography

Clerke, Teena, and Nick Hopwood. 2014. "Ethnography as a collective research endeavor." Pp. 5-18 in *Doing ethnography in teams*: Springer.

Burton, L.M. & Welsh, W. (2016). Inequality and opportunity: The role of exclusion, social capital, and generic social processes in upward mobility. NY: William T. Grant Foundation <http://blog.wtgrantfoundation.org/post/135258445927/new-report-the-role-of-exclusion-socialcapital>

Creese, Angela, Arvind Bhatt, Nirmala Bhojani, and Peter Martin. 2008. "Fieldnotes in team ethnography: Researching complementary schools." *Qualitative Research* 8(2):197-215.

! Purpose of the week: This week, we will discuss how ethnographers conduct team to research and examples of team ethnography.

! Assignment: No assignment-prepare for a final paper.

Week 11: Combining Online and Offline Ethnography

Przybylski, Liz. 2021. *Hybrid ethnography : online, offline, and in between*. Los Angeles: SAGE. Read Introduction.

Lane, Jeffery. 2019. *The digital street*. New York: Oxford University Press. Read the methodology appendix and skim through the table of content.

Ruo-Fan Liu. 2022. Hybrid Ethnography: Access, Positionality, and Data Assembly, *Ethnography*.

! Purpose of the week: Throughout the semester, we have learned how to conduct ethnography, jotting and shadowing, theorizing, as well as evaluating ethnographic work. In the final week, we are going to discuss some new trends that ethnographers encounter. 1) How do ethnographers deal with data collection in the era of digital transformation? 2) How do we conduct ethnography that entails online

and offline settings? 3) What are new ways to revisit the tips we have learned, such as jotting, theorizing, and many others?

1 No assignment. Devote your time to preparing your final paper.

Week12: Ethnographer Café: Learn from Real Ethnographers (Virtual) or Share your project with peers

1. I have considered two plans for this week but have not yet decided which option to choose. Will discuss with students during the first-week meeting or choose among one based on student feedback. For plan 1, students are asked to participate virtually in a workshop or a talk delivered by ethnographers—something like an ethnography café' or ethnographic lab. For plan 2, I will invite different speakers to virtually join a class to show how ethnographers are very different. Students need to prepare questions and skim through these scholarly works to have a conversation with real ethnographers.