I have a general idea about their life and some acquaintance with their language, and if I can somehow only “document” all this, I’ll have valuable material.

Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*

Yes, we go and talk to people. Some of these people even have the patience and kindness and generosity to talk to us. We try to listen well. We write fieldnotes about all the things we’ve misunderstood,…And then it is time to pack our suitcases and return home. And so begins our work, our hardest work—to bring the ethnographic moment back, to resurrect it, to communicate the distance, which too quickly starts to feel like an abyss, between what we saw and hear and our inability, finally, to do justice to it in our representations.

Ruth Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer*

**COURSE INTRODUCTION:**
This class examines qualitative methods used in anthropology, focusing primarily on participant-observation, on asking questions, on writing fieldnotes, and on the transformation of these primary field data into written ethnographic documents. Ethnography is a fundamental part of anthropology. Ethnography “the writing of culture” is used in two contrasting senses, referring both to the method of qualitative research characterized by living and working among people through the process of participant observation and to the product of this research: the written account. This course will focus both on the process of producing, reading and interpreting written accounts of culture, and on the methodology required for ethnographic research.

**COURSE GOALS:**
This course has several primary objectives. One goal is to give you a number of practical, applied tools during the course of the semester, which you will use in ethnographic projects. The second objective is to allow you to practice and implement these tools. The third is to read and discuss work by anthropologists, especially focusing on the lessons they learned and the challenges they faced. The final goal is to help you understand how to move from project design, to project implementation, to data analysis and reporting.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**
ASSIGNMENTS: additional handouts will be provided for each assignment

1. Pilot Field Study (40%)
   a. For this study, you are to select a site and design a mini-research proposal by week 3. Throughout the semester you will do assignments at your chosen field site that are designed to give you practice using specific methods for data collection (4 assignments worth 10% each). During the second half of the semester, students will dedicate more time to their fieldwork sites as well as share typed fieldnotes in pairs or small teams.

2. Research Report (35%)
   a. The course will culminate in a final ten-page research report (20%) on the trial field project. An annotated bibliography will be due first (5%). The final report should include:
      1. A problem statement, supported by some references to the research literature/short literature review.
      2. A description of the research site, including people and activities involved.
      3. A description of your method for gaining access to the site and establishing field relationships. Observer effects on the data. Ethical problems encountered.
      4. A description of your data-gathering activities.
      5. A description of your data-analysis procedures.
      6. A statement of your findings. These will be exploratory and tentative, but should be grounded in the data you will have collected. How do the findings relate to your original problem statement? Do they confirm, refute, or suggest a reformulation of the research problem? What do these early findings suggest about what you would need to do to continue this research?
   b. Each student will present their research findings to the class (10%). Classmates are expected to offer feedback on the research methods and findings.

3. Thoughtful Participation (10%)
   a. Remember, this is a seminar-style course and a portion of your grade is based on your participation. This includes active listening, responding to your classmates in respectful and engaging ways; also making comments that connect with course readings and demonstrate that you have read and thought about the material for the day’s discussion. Each student will be expected to lead the discussion with a partner for one class, either as advocate or critic of the assigned readings. While there are assigned discussion leaders, you should be prepared to fulfill this role on any given day—this requires that you come to class having finished the reading and thought about possible questions and comments to share with the class. You should reflect on the key methodological questions you see in the readings, issues you think are worthy of further discussion, and analytic problems you think are important in the readings.

4. Exam (15%)
   a. There will be one exam that covers the three ethnographies explored in class.

Your final grade for the course will be based on the following:
- Pilot Field Study…………………………..40%
- Research Report……………………………..35%
- Participation………………………………..10%
- Exam…………………………………………15%

TOTAL 100%

GRADING SCALE:
A  94%+   A- 90-93%
B+ 87-89%  B  84-86%  B- 80-83%
C+ 77-79%  C  74-76%  C- 70-73%
D+ 67-69%  D  64-66%  D- 60-63%
F  59%

A note on graded materials—you must wait at least 24 hours (but no more than 1 week) before coming to see me about a grade you received on any class material. I am available for consultation regarding any graded assignment only after you have taken sufficient time to read through both your original work and my comments. Keep in mind that reviewing graded material means a possible increase OR decrease in the original grade, so be sure to look over your work carefully before bringing it to my attention for a second time.

The following information will help you better understand the criteria for graded material:
A= exceptionally thought-provoking, original, creative in both content and manner of presentation, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials which are fully supported.

B= presents a solid understanding of the subject matter and an ability to handle the issues and materials encountered in the subject with only minor errors.

C= demonstrates an adequate understanding of the subject matter with central ideas present, but too general, repetitious and not clearly supported or integrated with evidence and details.

D= a minimally acceptable performance with a confusing central idea and lacking details. Parts of the assignment are missing and/or incomplete.

F= shows lack of effort and minimal comprehension of material with major mechanical errors, no thesis, and misuse of key concepts.

ATTENDANCE:
Regular attendance and active class participation is required. Late arrivals will not be tolerated. Class attendance will be taken at the beginning of the period, and it is your responsibility to make sure you receive credit for your attendance if you arrive after attendance is taken. Irregular attendance and repeated late arrivals will result in the lowering of the final course grade. Also note that you should be both physically and mentally present—this means demonstrating active listening skills, participating and refraining from causing class distractions (ie. Leaving during class—unless for an emergency).

CLASS PREPARATION:
Your class preparation is essential to your required active participation in the course. You must complete assigned readings before the class period for which they are assigned. You must come to
class with prepared questions and comments regarding the assigned readings (see participation in course requirements). This will help ensure your active participation in class. Things to think about regarding the readings: What was the author’s main point/thesis? How does this relate to the class topic? What connection can you make between the reading and your own life?

ASSIGNMENT POLICY:
It is important that students pay close attention to the details on assignments, which will be provided in handouts. Hard copy assignments must be turned in NUMBERED AND STAPLED (electronic copies must also have page numbers—also it is the student’s responsibility to make sure their assignment is properly attached to the email). All assignments are due at the beginning of the class session, unless otherwise noted. Late assignments will not be accepted without a medical excuse or otherwise documented emergency. The instructor retains the right to lower the grade on any late assignment accepted. If you must miss class on the day an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to turn the assignment in early.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:
All work must be your own. You must give credit to any information and/or ideas that you use that are not your own by citing it in your work. Failing to do so will be perceived as plagiarism resulting in a zero on the assignment and possible additional penalties to be decided by the instructor. If you are unfamiliar with proper citation procedures, you should consult the W center and/or come speak with me.

ACCOMMODATIONS:
“DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and university administered activities with reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act and Amendments (ADAAA). If you are a student who believes you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Disability Services for further information on how to receive accommodations and support. Contact information for Student Disability Services is: 408 S. Locust Street, Suite 200, in The Memorial Student Union Building (765-658-6267) (studentdisabilityservices@depauw.edu). Accommodations cannot be implemented until the faculty member has received the official ADA letter, released by Student Disability Services. It is critical that you schedule a time to discuss the implementation of the accommodations specified in your letter with each faculty member receiving the letter. Accommodations are not retroactive. Students with documented disabilities have the right to choose not to use accommodations, and in exercising that right, they accept the resulting outcomes. This means that faculty are under no obligation to retroactively address any issue arising from students' choices to forgo accommodations.”

QUESTIONS???
I encourage all of my students to take advantage of my office hours, either for questions, concerns, or just “drop-in” discussions. Please feel free to stop by Asbury Hall 219, and if the “official” hours are not convenient or you would like to ensure yourself a specific block of time, we can set up an appointment (office phone x4372 or email acastaneda@depauw.edu).

COURSE SCHEDULE
*Keep all of your Fieldwork and Box exercises together in a portfolio (see pg. 204 in Fieldworking)
WEEK 1: The What and Why of Ethnography  
August 27th  
Course introductions and expectations; Box 1

WEEK 2: Ethnography and Ethics: responsibilities of ethnographers  
September 1st  
READ: Fieldworking ch. 1; Box 2 and 3

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: This will be the first step toward your major research project. Go out, explore the world, and come back with some possibilities for the research topic, setting, scene, locale, etc. Be prepared to present your ideas to the class for discussion and possible modification; see “Select a Fieldsite” Box.

September 3rd  
READ: DePauw’s Human Subjects/IRB website information; BOX: Select a Fieldsite

WEEK 3: On being a Freshman and Ethics continued…  
September 8th  
READ: Nathan chapters 1-4; Fieldworking pgs. 55-62; Box 4

September 10th  
READ: Nathan chapters 5-7 + afterword

DISCUSSION LEADERS

WEEK 4: Fieldwriting  
September 15th  
READ: Fieldworking chapter 2; (Box 5 in class)

September 17th  
READ: Fieldworking chapter 3; Box 10 (Box 7-9 and 11 in class)

WEEK 5: Reading Cultures  
September 22nd  
READ: Box 15

DUE: Identify a cultural artifact from your field site and evaluate it as a source of ethnographic information. This exercise will require that you conduct observation and begin building rapport in your fieldsite. Areas to consider include: authorship, context, audience and purpose.

September 24th  
Box 12 and 13

WEEK 6: Place and Space  
September 29th  
READ: Muehlmann Intro, chapters 1-2

DISCUSSION LEADERS

October 1st  
READ: Fieldworking chapter 4; Box 16 and 17

WEEK 7: Collaborative Listening in the Field
October 6th
READ: Muehlmann chapters 3-4
DUE: Box 18 Conduct observations on your research site and construct a map to be used as part of your final research report. It must be a real place with real people and the assignment must take you into “the field.” Use the map as a way to investigate the interactions of people who live there and also how they use space.

October 8th
READ: Fieldworking chapter 5; Box 23 (Box 20 in class)

WEEK 8: Translation and Fieldwork
October 13th
READ: Muehlmann chapters 5-7
DUE: Recruit a person you don’t know from your field site for an open-ended interview. This exercise will sharpen your observation skills and train you to ask increasingly precise questions about your subject. It will also require that you pay close attention to various forms of communication (verbal and body language) as well as the use of new specialized vocabulary. Record the interview, take field notes and transcribe the interview. Turn in your coded field notes as well as a verbal portrait of the person (Box 25).

October 15th
READ: Fieldworking chapter 6; Box 26 and 27

WEEK 9 FALL BREAK

WEEK 10: “Capturing” the Field
October 27th
READ: Fieldworking chapter 7; Box 31 and 32

October 29th Asbury 222 reserved
READ: Bourgois introduction and chapter 1
DUE: In addition to your written words, how else might you describe and illustrate your field site for others? Take photographs or video of your field site and compile a visual presentation for class. You should think clearly about how the images you collect tell a story about your research. Be sure to record the process in your field notes (date and time, context, setting of recordings) also include a list of captions for the images separate from the final product.

WEEK 11: Expanding Ethnographic Documentation
November 3rd
READ: Bourgois chapters 2-5
DISCUSSION LEADERS

November 5th
READ: Bourgois chapters 7-9 and conclusion
DUE: Prepare a tentative outline of your paper based on your mini-ethnographic assignments. Identify the data you will need to make your argument (which assignments need to be repeated or new ones conducted). Discuss how you will organize and analyze your data.
November 10th
EXAM

November 12th
READ: *Fieldworking* chapter 8; work in teams Box 34

**WEEK 13:**
November 17th
Feedback Day—work in teams; Box 33
*Field notes due*

November 19th
American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Denver, Colorado

**WEEK 14:**
November 24th
Feedback Day—work in teams
*Field notes due*

November 26th
NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK

**WEEK 15:** Proposal Presentations
December 1st
Feedback Day—work in teams
*Field notes due*

December 3rd
Individual writing conferences

**WEEK 16:** Moving Forward—from methods to senior seminar
December 8th
**PRESENTATIONS**

December 10th
**PRESENTATIONS** and **PAPERS DUE**

NOTE: The instructor retains the right to change the syllabus for this class as necessary.