

**FLR 607 (CRN 25424): SEMINAR FOLKLORE FIELDWORK  
WINTER 2008, W 2:00-4:50, 206 FR**

**Professor:** Lisa Gilman

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**Office hours:** M 1:00-3:00 pm, T 12:00-2:00 pm, and by appointment

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**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- **Finnegan, Ruth.** 1992. *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts: A Guide to Research Practices*. New York: Routledge. [UO Bookstore and reserve Knight Library]
- **Gluck, Sherna Berger and Daphne Patai.** 1991. *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. New York: Routledge. [UO Bookstore and reserve Knight Library].
- **Bartis, Peter.** 2002 [1979]. *Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques*. Library of Congress Washington 2002. Available online <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/> or as PDF on Blackboard.
- *A Manual for Documentation: Fieldwork & Preservation for Ethnomusicologists, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* The Society for Ethnomusicology, 2001. [available for purchase from Prof. Gilman \$6]
- **Additional Readings** accessible on Blackboard.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

- **Georges, Robert A. and Michael O. Jones.** 1980. *People Studying People: The Human Element in Fieldwork*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- **Jackson, Bruce.** 1987. *Fieldwork*. Urbana: University of Chicago Press

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course introduces students to ethnographic fieldwork in folklore by integrating research practice with methodological and theoretical readings. Topics include identifying a subject of study, developing appropriate research strategies, initiating fieldwork, establishing rapport, reflexivity, representation, and uses for technology. Each student will conceptualize and execute a fieldwork project while developing practical skills in proposal writing, observation, interviewing, analysis, documentation, and presentation.

**GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS** (guidelines for each assignment will be distributed in class):

**Ten assignments (50% final grade, 5% each):** When possible, assignments should contribute to final project.

**Assignment #1: CITI test, due 1/16:** Students must pass the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) test required for Human Subjects approval. <http://www.uoregon.edu/~humansub/citiprogram.htm>.

**Assignment #2: Observation of worship service at religious institution (church, temple, mosque, etc.), due 1/16:** Attend a worship service with which you are not already familiar. Write a 3-4 page detailed description of your observations. Pay attention to spatial, temporal, and interactional dynamics. Take into account such things as numbers of people present, dress, gender dynamics, use of space, class [check out cars in parking lot]...

**Assignment #3: Research Plan for this term, due 1/23:** 2-3 pages explaining your research topic, research goals, strategies for accomplishing your goals, timeline, and format for final project.

**Assignment #4: Observation: group exercise using different forms of documentation, due 1/30:** Guidelines to be distributed in class.

**Assignment #5: Interview 1 assignment, due 2/6:** Conduct one interviewee-driven audio-recorded interview (30-60 minutes long). Design your interview to elicit information about the individual and their engagement with some type of folklore. Your paper should describe the interview process and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the interview.

**Assignment #6: Interview transcription, 2/13:** Word-for-word transcription of Interview #1

**Assignment #7: Reflexive report of fieldwork thus far, due 2/20:** Provide a brief summary of what you have accomplished thus far and reflexively consider your research process, e.g. ethical concerns, positionality, and other methodological issues

**Assignment #8: Interview 2, due 2/27:** Conduct a second interview (30-60 minutes long) with an individual (either the same or different from Assignment #2) in which you try new strategies and attempt to improve upon the first interview. 3-4-page paper should describe the interview process and reflect on strengths and weaknesses.

**Assignment #9: Critical review of ethnography or ethnographic film, due 3/5:** Select a folklore study based in ethnographic fieldwork methods (book or film). Write a 3-4-page paper in which you critically consider the author's or filmmaker's fieldwork methodologies.

**Assignment #10: Presentation (5% final grade), 3/12:** An oral presentation of the final project accompanied by audio-visuals (you may choose to use photography, video, and/or audio recording).

**Fieldwork journal/fieldnotes (10% final grade), due 3/17 by 5:00 pm:** Students are required to keep a journal of their research this term, documenting their progress, noting details, and reflecting on their strategies. You should write one or more entries per week. Entries should cover fieldnotes and reflections on all significant steps of the research process (making contact, observations, interviews, recordings, successes, failures, and so on). You may include class assignments in your journal as relevant. Format is up to you.

**Final Project (40% final grade), due 3/17 by 5:00 pm.** Each student will work in conjunction with instructor to identify a fieldwork topic and to complete a fieldwork project during the course of the term. A student's interest will determine their choice of format for their final product. Options are:

1. Fieldwork report [10 page report detailing process and goals].
2. Conference-length research paper [10 page paper integrating fieldwork and analysis].
3. Draft of prospectus of M.A. thesis or terminal project.
4. Students interested in other presentation formats should discuss options with instructor.

### **Attendance**

- Attendance is mandatory and fundamental to your success in this course.
- If you have to miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain notes and materials. If absence is due to excusable circumstances, you may meet with me (office hours/scheduled appointment) to review missed materials.
- Excusable circumstances include: death in family, serious illness, ill dependents, observance of a religious holiday, and other university recognized conflicts. Be prepared to provide documentation.
- If excusable circumstances prevent your turning in an assignment on time, inform your professor **before** or **within 24 hours after** the due date via e-mail, telephone, or a dated note in the professor's mailbox (this requirement will be lifted in extreme circumstances). **Papers will drop one letter grade for each day they are late (if unexcused).**

**Disability:** I will do everything possible to assist those with special needs. Please meet with me in the first week of class to discuss how I can accommodate you.

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## SCHEDULE OF CLASS READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### WEEK 1, JAN 9: GETTING STARTED

#### Topics:

- What is fieldwork?
- Participant observation
- Fieldwork for academic vs. public sector
- Finding a topic
- Identifying a fieldwork community
- Developing Rapport

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### WEEK 2, JAN 16: RESEARCH GOALS/RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Assignment #1: CITI test successfully completed

Assignment #2: Observation of church service

#### Topics:

- Discussion of worship service observations
- Research strategies for different types of research
- Project design
- Human Subjects: visits from Juliana Kyrk and Kaija Maggard

#### Readings (strategic skimming recommended this week):

- Bartis, Peter. 2002 [1979]. *Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques*. Library of Congress Washington 2002. Available: <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/> or as PDF on Blackboard.
- Finnegan. Ch. 3 & 5
- Dewalt, Kathleen M., Billie R. Dewalt with Coral B. Wayland. 1998. Participant Observation. In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard, pp. 259-99. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [Blackboard]
- Benmayor. "Testimony, Action Research, and Empowerment: Puerto Rican Women and Popular Education." (Gluck and Patai, p. 159)
- Spitzer, Nicholas R. 1992. Cultural Conversion: Metaphors and Methods in Public Folklore. In *Public Folklore*, eds. Robert Baron and Nicholas Spitzer, pp. 77-103. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. [Blackboard]
- Human Subjects : Statement of the American Folklore Society on Research with Human Subjects (<http://www.afsnet.org/aboutAFS/humansubjects.cfm>). [Blackboard]

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### WEEK 3, JAN 23: DOCUMENTING

Assignment #3: Research Plan for this term

#### Topics:

- Observation
- Documenting
  - Fieldnotes
  - Photography
  - Video
  - Audio

#### Readings (strategic skimming recommended this week):

- Finnegan Ch. 4
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, pp. 1-38. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. [Blackboard]
- Collier, John Jr. and Malcolm Collier. *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*, pp. 161-73. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. [Blackboard]
- Henley, Paul. 2004. Putting Film to Work: Observational Cinema as Practical Ethnography. In *Working Images: Visual Research and Representation in Ethnography*, eds. Sarah Pink, László Kürti, and Ana Isabel Afonso, pp. 109-30. NY: Routledge. [Blackboard]

- *A Manual for Documentation: Fieldwork & Preservation for Ethnomusicologists*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed. The Society for Ethnomusicology, 2001. [Skim]

## WEEK 4, JAN 30: CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW

### Assignment #4: Observation: group exercise, experiment with different forms of documentation

#### Topics

- Discussion Assignment #4
- Types of interviews
- Practical interview exercise

#### Readings:

- Briggs, Charles L.. 1986. Listen Before You Leap: Toward Methodological Sophistication. In *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*, pp. 93-111. Cambridge University Press. [Blackboard]
- Anderson and Jack. "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses." (Gluck and Patai, p. 11)
- Minister, "A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview." (Gluck and Patai, p. 27)
- Stone, Ruth M. and Verlon L Stone. 1981. Event, Feedback, and Analysis: Research Media in the Study of Music Events. *Ethnomusicology* 25 (2): 215-25. [Blackboard]

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## WEEK 5, FEB 6: ADDITIONAL SOURCES AND STRATEGIES

### Assignment #5: Interview 1 assignment

#### Topics:

- Discussion of Interview assignment
- Other research sources:
  - Internet
  - Library
  - Archives
- Processing interviews:
  - Annotation
  - Transcription

#### Readings:

- Finnegan. Chapter 9 (on transcription)

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## WEEK 6, FEB 13: THE SELF IN RESEARCH/ETHICS

### Assignment #6: Interview transcription

#### Topics:

- Progress Report
- The self in research

#### Readings:

- Finnegan, Chapter 10

#### *Choose Two:*

- Etter-Lewis. "Black Women's Life Stories: Reclaiming Self in Narrative Texts." (Gluck and Patai, p. 43)
- Olson and Shopes, "Crossing Boundaries, Building Bridges: Doing Oral History among Working-Class Women and Men." (Gluck and Patai, p. 189)
- Patai. "U.S. Academics and Third World Women: Is Ethical Research Possible?" (Gluck and Patai, p. 137)
- Stacey, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography." (Gluck and Patai, p. 111)

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**WEEK 7, FEB 20: MANAGING DATA/ANALYSIS**

**Assignment #7: Reflexive report of fieldwork thus far**

**Topics:**

- Classification
- Identifying patterns
- Analysis

**Readings:**

- Finnegan, Chapter 8
- Bernard, H. Russell and Gery W. Ryan. 1998. Text Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods. In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard, pp. 595-646. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [Blackboard]
- Borland, "'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research" (Gluck/Patai, p. 63)

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**WEEK 8, FEB 27: CRITICALLY CONSUMING  
ETHNOGRAPHIC PRODUCTS**

**Assignment 8: Interview 2**

**Topics:**

- Discussion of interview experience
- Reading and writing Ethnography

**Readings:**

- James Clifford. 1986. "Introduction: Partial Truths." In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, p. 1-26. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Blackboard]
- George Marcus. 1986. Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the Modern World System. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, p. 165-93. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Blackboard]

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**WEEK 9, MAR 5: FROM TEXT TO TEXT**

**Assignment #9: Critical review of ethnography or ethnographic film**

**Topics:**

- Producing texts

**Readings:**

- Clifford, James. 1986. "On Ethnographic Allegory." In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus. Berkeley, p.98: University of California Press. [Blackboard]
- Salazar, Claudia "A Third World Woman's Text: Between the Politics of Criticism and Cultural Politics." (Gluck and Patai, p. 93)
- Underberg, Natalie M. 2006. Virtual and Reciprocal Ethnography on the Internet: The East Mims Oral History Project Website. *Journal of American Folklore* 119 (473): 301-11. [Blackboard]
- Ancelet, Barry Jean. 2003. The Theory and Practice of Activist Folklore: From Fieldwork to Programming. In *Working the Field: Accounts from French Louisiana*, eds. Henry and LeMenestrel, pp. 81-100. Connecticut: Praegers Publishers. [Blackboard]

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**WEEK 10, 3/12: FINAL PRESENTATIONS**

**Assignment #10: Students present on final projects**

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**FINAL PROJECTS AND FIELDWORK JOURNALS  
DUE 5:00 PM ON MONDAY, March 17**

