

F528 section 27831
Advanced Fieldwork: Writing and Representation
Wednesday 9:30-12:00, Woodburn Hall 118
Fall Semester 2005

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Office hours: 1-3 Wed., or by appt.

Course Description: This course is designed to meet two, interlinked goals: 1. to provide upper level graduate students with additional experience conducting fieldwork; and 2. to focus on the art of writing ethnography. The course will focus on the writing process associated with fieldwork-- especially fieldnotes, but also fieldtape documentation, indexes, transcriptions, etc.—and analyze the relationship between these components and the construction of a final, publishable ethnography. Additionally, we will analyze different modes of representation, from more conventional ethnographies to experimental approaches, and compare/contrast writing for “stand-alone” written products such as articles and books with writing for multimedia projects. The course will link the theoretical aspects of ethnographic writing with practical assignments in which students will conduct fieldwork and experiment with various approaches to write-up. Fulfills core requirement in ethnomusicology. Prerequisite: F523.

Required Reading:

1. Books, available at the IU Bookstore and on reserve at the Wells Library, with few exceptions (see below). I recognize that this is a substantial number of books that could take a large bite out of your bank accounts. Although I encourage you to purchase books when possible, you should definitely make use of reserves as per your preference. You will not be required to read every one of the books below in its entirety; in those cases making use of reserves might be a logical choice (though remember there will be competition for the books on reserve, so plan ahead if you choose this strategy).

Emerson, Robert, Rachel I. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw.

1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.

Geertz, Clifford.

1988. *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Stanford: U. of Stanford Press.

Gottlieb, Alma.

1992. *Under the Kapok Tree: Identity and Difference in Beng Thought*.
Bloomington: Indiana U. Press.

Gottlieb, Alma and Philip Graham.

1994. *Parallel Worlds: A Writer and an Anthropologist Encounter Africa*.
Chicago: University of Chicago.

- McCall, John C.
2000. *Dancing Histories: Heuristic Ethnography with the Ohafia Igbo*. Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press.
- McNaughton, Patrick.
2000. *Five Windows into Africa* (CD-ROM). Bloomington: Indiana U. Press.
- McKnight, Reginald.
2002. *He Sleeps: A Novel*. New York: Picador.
- Reed, Daniel B.
2003. *Dan Ge Performance: Masks and Music in Contemporary Cote d'Ivoire*. Bloomington: Indiana U. Press.
- Seeger, Anthony.
2003. *Why Suyas Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*. Urbana, IL: U. of Illinois Press.
- Stoller, Paul.
2002. *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.
- Stoller, Paul.
1999. *Jaguar: A Story of Africans in America*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.

The following book is out of print. In the past, students have easily found copies by searching on-line used book dealers. Otherwise, it is available only on reserve at the Archives of Traditional Music Listening Library:

- Merriam, Alan P.
1967. *Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians*. Chicago: Aldine.

2. Required articles are available through e-reserves. Password is: experience

- Abu-Lughod, Lila.
1993. "Introduction." *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-44.
- Barz, Gregory F.
1997. "Confronting the Field(Note) In and Out of the Field: Music, Voices, Text, and Experiences in Dialogue." *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, eds, pp. 45-62. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 45-62.
- Clifford, James and George Marcus, eds.
1986. Introduction: Partial Truths." *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (already on e-reserve)
- Hillerman, Tony.
1989. "Making Mysteries with Navajo Materials." *Literature and Anthropology*. Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press. pp. 5-13.

Kousaleos, Nicole.

2000. "Introduction: Taking Theory from Lives." *Screaming the Silence: Experience, Agency and Transformation in the Lives of American Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse*. Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, pp. 1-54.

McCall, John C.

2000. "Portrait of a Brave Woman." *Dancing Histories" Heuristic Ethnography among the Ohafia Igbo*. Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press, pp. 117-136.

McNaughton, Patrick.

In preparation. Excerpt from book manuscript on Sidi Ballo.

Course Requirements:

1. Fieldwork project. You will conduct a very short-term fieldwork project that will begin **immediately at the beginning of the semester; field research must be completed by the end of October at the absolute latest.** Why? Because you will need time to process your fieldnotes and other raw materials and turn them into a paper. You must choose to study **either a recurring event or a person.** You should not be overly concerned with whether your topic relates to your planned dissertation topic; instead, think of this as an opportunity to focus on fieldwork and writing techniques. On the other hand, if you can easily choose a topic that is relevant to your dissertation research, it would be to your advantage to do so. The assignments (see below) will help you structure this project, as you will be forced to reach certain stages of the research by particular dates. For instance, you must choose your topic and methods by our second class on September 7. You are also required to meet with me in office hours and/or to dialog with me on email as you choose a project.

2. Fieldnote journal. It would be advantageous for you to type fieldnotes on a word processor so that you can easily excerpt sections in fulfillment of assignments. But your fieldnotes will consist of far more than just these assignments. Fieldnotes should be a regular, periodic documentation of your field experience, however you define that, and your experience in this course. Fieldwork is more than just what happens when we are "in the field", actively documenting an event or interviewing a participant. "The field" is a concept, a mode of inquiry. Given that you will have other classes and responsibilities during the semester, and thus cannot be 100% focused on fieldwork, I will not require daily entries. *You* should decide how to define your particular mode of inquiry and thus how much and when you should write.

At a minimum, however, your fieldnote journal should include:

A. a full documentation of your "contact time" with consultants, including a. your initial impressions of things; b. a focus on what *you* recognize as key events or incidents; and c. what *others* (those whom you are studying) recognize as important. These are likely to be different stages of the fieldwork project, in a chronological sense. But you might also be able to distinguish and include these three perspectives in considering a single event. Issues key to ethnography underlie this requirement, including the importance of carefully attributing whose ideas are whose—which come

from a consultant, which are your own, etc.—and the related conceptual imperative, fundamental to ethnography, of mediating between your own perspective and those of the people you study (ie, “indigenous concepts”).

B. reactions to readings (done prior to the day the reading is assigned). How are the readings impacting your research and thinking? When it comes time to begin coding and writing up, how are the different representational styles we are reading influencing your thinking and choices?

C. the issues and questions raised in the assignments (see list of assignments below).

But you should think of these just as starting points; your particular project, perspective and approach will determine what else you choose to write about in your fieldnote journal.

I will collect completed fieldnote journals no later than in class on **November 30**, and excerpts for assignments periodically throughout the semester.

3. Final paper. Length: roughly 20 pages. This assignment has two goals: 1. to allow you to reflect on your fieldwork process, and 2. to allow you to complete the process from field experience to final write-up, choosing a representational style and voice that feels appropriate to your research. The emphasis of this paper should be process. I am less concerned about fully developed, theoretically sophisticated conclusions, and more interested in 1. how you document your ethnographic process and 2. whether you come up with good questions. The paper should include: description of your topic and thesis statement; a narrative outline of what you did (your methods); how your ideas changed during the research; what you discovered; an assessment of the whole process, and questions that emerged. Note that many of the issues I am requiring you to address in the assignments are similar; you should be able to adapt and/or incorporate into the final paper passages from your field journals. **Due: in class December 7.**

4. Oral Presentation. During the final two weeks of class you will summarize your paper in an oral form for the class. These presentations will be different from a typical conference presentation in that they will be looser and more process-oriented, much like the final paper. You will share with the class your field process—problems encountered, insights gained, questions raised.

In preparing both the final paper and the oral presentation, it will help to look back at your field journal and in particular the assignments. The assignments cover some of the kinds of things I would like you to address in both the written and oral forms of the final (re)presentation.

Calendar:

August 31: Class 1, INTRODUCTION

September 7: Class 2, ETHNOGRAPHERS AS AUTHORS

Geertz, *Works and Lives*

Assignments 1 and 2 due.

Mandatory office hour session or email dialog on field project no later than Sept. 9

September 14: Class 3, FIELDNOTES

Emerson Fretz Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*

Assignments 3 and 4 due

September 21: Class 4, ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING PROCESS/ AUTHORITY AND REPRESENTATION I

Merriam, *Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians*

Seeger, *Why Suyu Sing*

Both books, along with field collections including written documents upon which the books are based are on reserve in the Archives of Traditional Music Listening Library.

Assignments 5 and 6 due

September 28: Class 5, ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING PROCESS/ AUTHORITY AND REPRESENTATION II

Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths"

Abu-Lughod, "Introduction"

Kousaleos, "Introduction: Taking Theory From Lives"

Assignment 7 due

October 5: Class 6, ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING PROCESS/ AUTHORITY AND REPRESENTATION III

McCall, John. "Portrait of a Brave Woman"

The field collection and written documents upon which the book is based are on reserve in the Archives of Traditional Music Listening Library.

Assignment 8 due

October 12: Class 7, ETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING PROCESS/ AUTHORITY AND REPRESENTATION IV

Reed, *Dan Ge Performance*, selected excerpts

The field collection and written documents upon which the book is based are on reserve in the Archives of Traditional Music Listening Library.

Assignment: begin thematic coding (not collected)

October 19: Class 8, EXPERIMENTAL TURNS: CHALLENGES TO THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FIELDNOTES & PUBLISHED ETHNOGRAPHY

Barz, "Confronting the Field(Note)..."

Stone, selections from "Gbarbea Funeral" in *Five Windows into Africa*

Reed, *Dan Ge Performance*, chapters 7-8

October 26, Class 9: FICTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Hillerman, "Making Mysteries with Navajo Materials"

McKnight, *He Sleeps*

Assignment: begin memoing (ie, begin writing about themes)

November 2, Class 10: ETHNOGRAPHY VS. ETHNOGRAPHIC FICTION

Compare/contrast Stoller's representational styles and choices:

Stoller, *Jaguar*

Stoller, *Money Has No Smell*

November 9, Class 11: MEMOIR VS. ETHNOGRAPHY

Compare and contrast representational styles in:

Gottlieb, *Under the Kapok Tree*

Gottlieb and Graham, *Parallel Worlds*

November 16: No class (SEM)

November 23, No class (Thanksgiving)

November 30, Class 12: WRITING FOR MULTIMEDIA

Compare and contrast representational styles in:

McNaughton, "Kono Don" from *Five Windows into Africa*

McNaughton, "A Profile of Mande Aesthetics" from unpublished ms. on Sidi Ballo

Guest lecture: Dr. Patrick McNaughton

Journals due

December 7, class 13: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Final papers due

MONDAY, December 12, 8-10 AM, class 14: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

FIELDNOTE ASSIGNMENTS

1. How did you decide what to study? What background (classes, books, theoretical insights, personal experiences, whatever) informed the choice? What impact might any of this background have on what you are studying (ie, take stock of your reflexive positioning toward the research at the beginning, then later note if/how this changes during the research)?
2. As EFS write, *what* researchers find out is inherently connected to *how* they find it out. Write about your methodological choices. What are your methods and why have you chosen them? What implications might your methods have on the research process? Then at a later point in your journal, document how your methods have impacted your findings.
3. Document the process of making contact (in other words, begin documenting your field experience). Did you find what/whom you were looking for? Or has your original plan been adapted by the field experience already?
4. According to the decisions you have made regarding ethnographic focus, what sorts of things are you focusing on in your fieldnotes, and what are you leaving out?
5. Through your participation as a researcher, what impact are you having on the phenomena you are studying?
6. EFS write that fieldnotes are not a simple, pure documentation of facts, but rather represent particular perspectives and choices. With this thought in mind, write about the same event at least twice. In each case, choose a different focus or organizational perspective for your writing. For example, you might choose to write about the event once in chronological order, and then a second time by beginning with some significant moment in the event and building the rest of your description around that. Alternatively, you might choose to prioritize a spatial perspective, or a sensory perspective.
7. Consider your identity vis-à-vis what/whom you are studying. In what ways are you an insider? In what ways an outsider? How relevant are these categories? And more broadly, are aspects of your identity changing in some way(s) through the research process?
8. Document examples of two different types of processes inherent to fieldwork:
 - A. Describe some aspect of **the processes involved in the phenomenon you are studying**. A few examples of foci:
 - if you are studying a performance, what interactional processes are at play during the performance, or in the arranging of the performance, or in rehearsals?
 - if you are studying a recurring event, how have particular aspects of the performance changed over the course of the research?
 - if you are documenting the making of something, write about that process
 - have participants' ideas associated with the phenomenon you are studying changed during the research, and if so how?
 - B. Describe some aspect of **the process of your research**. Again, some examples:
 - document a shift or evolution in your understanding of some aspect of the research
 - document a way in which your research methods and/or focus have changed as a result of the field experience