

Fall 2019
AMST 401T: Ethnography
Professor Lane
Class time: MW 11:30-12:45pm
Class location: EC-011

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Office Hours: M 2:30-4:30pm; W 9-10am;
& by appointment

AMST 401T: American Culture through Ethnography Course Syllabus

Course Description:

In this interdisciplinary seminar students will conduct independent research on aspects of contemporary American culture using ethnographic research methods including interviews and participant-observation. The course offers a rare chance to not just read others' research but to create your own.

Ethnographic research is conducted by actually going out into the field and talking to and observing the people or places you want to know more about. The goal of ethnography is to come to understand and appreciate the variety and complexity of human lives and the fascinating ways culture shapes how we see and act in the world. Students will learn to: conduct open-ended interviews; engage in participant-observation; analyze the complex primary and secondary source materials they collect; and represent the culture they studied through written and oral presentations. Assigned readings will offer pragmatic and intellectual guidance as well as models of ethnographic scholarship on American culture from a variety of disciplines. In addition to completing all course readings, students are expected to commit significant time outside of class to assignments, fieldwork, and project preparation.

Prerequisites:

Completion of AMST 201 and AMST 301 or graduate standing.

Learning Goals:

This course has multiple learning goals, all of which aim to prepare you to design, conduct, analyze, and present original research. Specifically, this course will help you:

- Probe the concept of culture and the interdisciplinary study thereof;
- Understand the core methods of ethnographic fieldwork, including open-ended interviewing and participant-observation;
- Develop a sophisticated understanding of the ethical dimensions of ethnographic research and the meaning of informed consent;
- Design and undertake original ethnographic research on an aspect of contemporary American culture;

- Sharpen your oral and written communication skills, particularly the ability to represent lived experience through written text;
- Learn to use many of a variety of technologies involved in recording, transcribing, and analyzing ethnographic materials;
- Think more deeply about American culture and the distinct and complex ways individuals and groups make sense of the world around them and their place in it.

Required Texts:

- Mitch Duneier, *Sidewalk* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2000)
- Kristen Ghodsee, *From Notes to Narrative: Writing Ethnographies That Everyone Can Read* (University of Chicago Press, 2016)
- All additional required readings are located on our Titanium course website

I do not require a specific edition of any book; you may purchase used copies or older editions from any bookstore or sites such as half.com. CSUF library and the American Studies reading room (GH-210a) may also have free copies of course books for you to borrow. Let me know **ASAP** if you have trouble getting the books so I can help out.

Assignment Schedule and Details:

There are no exams for this course. Over the semester you will complete multiple written assignments (listed below) and undertake an independent ethnographic research project on a topic of your choice. **All research projects must have my approval. Each student is required to meet with me individually to discuss their topic and research plan.** Assignments related to the project will be due over the course of the semester, culminating in a **final paper of roughly 10-15 pages (15-25 pages for graduate students).**

In evaluating your research papers, I will consider whether you have designed and conducted thoughtful, original research and provided a well-articulated and critical analysis of your findings. Your research paper should also be clearly conceptualized, well organized, and carefully edited.

Reading Markups: “Markup” or annotation is a technique used to identify the main points and subpoints of an argument, separate them from supporting evidence, engage with or challenge them, and generally read more deeply and effectively. For this class students will do markup on printed copies of all assigned readings, completing for each reading a set of tasks outlined in an assignment sheet. **This means you need to print out ALL course readings.** If this is difficult or prohibitively expensive for you, let me know and I will work to accommodate you. I check markups in the first 5 minutes of every class period. I do not give credit for late markups, so be sure to arrive to class on time with your markups ready.

Graduate Students: Requirements for graduate students differ from those of undergraduate students. Graduate students will write longer final research papers (15-25 pages) and will be required to read and incorporate more secondary sources than undergraduates. Graduate students are expected to demonstrate a higher level of written

and oral communication in this class, and I expect that their research papers will include more extensive research and greater analytical depth than that expected of undergraduates. I am happy to tailor course requirements and assignments to accord with individual graduate students' goals and interests. In order to do so, I need to get to know you and your work. **Each graduate student should contact me within the first three weeks of the semester to set up a meeting to discuss your goals for this course.**

Calendar of Assignments: All assignments are to be submitted by the beginning of class on the due date unless otherwise specified.

9/4	Homework: "Subcultures I Belong To" and "Making the Familiar Strange"
9/30	Homework: Complete Ethics Tutorial
9/30	Project Proposal Draft
10/2	Revised Project Proposal
10/30	Interview Analysis
11/13-12/11	Draft of Final Paper (exact draft deadlines will be determined individually)
12/18	Final Research Paper

Grading Standards and Criteria:

Class Participation (oral & written)	100 points
Markups & Homework	100 points
Project Proposal	100 points
Interview Analysis	200 points
Final Research Paper (and Draft)	500 points
TOTAL	1000 points

A+ Over 100%	B 82-87%	C- 70-71%	F Under 59%
A 92-100%	B- 80-81%	D+ 68-69%	
A- 90-91%	C+ 78-79%	D 62-67%	
B+ 88-89%	C 72-77%	D- 60-61%	

There is no final exam for this course; your final research paper will represent the culmination of the semester's work. No extra credit assignments are currently scheduled. If any are added later in the semester they will be equally available to all students. All grades will be posted in Titanium's Gradebook as soon as they are available. I will use the +/- grading system in this course. Extensions should be requested well in advance of the assignment deadline. There is no make-up work in this class without a documented excuse.

Academic dishonesty of any type will result in disciplinary action being taken against the student immediately. This includes cheating, helping others cheat, plagiarism, or other dishonest practices. Please refer to University Policy Statement below.

Attendance Policy:

- Attendance is required. You are expected to attend each and every class.
- You may miss up to three (3) class meetings without hurting your participation grade, because life happens; I do not need to see outside proof for three or fewer absences.
- After three absences, each additional absence will reduce your final course grade by one half letter grade (5 percentage points), except in extreme and documented circumstances.
- If you must miss a class because of a documented emergency or university-sponsored event, you will not be penalized. You must notify me of the reason for your absence as soon as possible; in some cases supporting documentation may be required.
- If you have a childcare emergency, consider bringing your child to class.

Classroom Policies:

For this class to work as it should, all students must be prepared, engaged, and supportive of one another's contributions. Most class hours will be committed to discussing readings and preparing and planning your individual research projects. For every week during which reading is assigned, students are expected to come to class having not only completed the reading, but having thought carefully about it and prepared questions and comments for discussion (these do not have to be in writing, but writing them up may be helpful to you).

Your **class participation grade** will depend not only on attendance and frequency of participation, but also on the substance of your participation, and how your contributions contributed to the creation of an engaging and intellectually rigorous seminar. If you cannot or choose not to participate verbally, it is your responsibility to meet with me to determine an alternative method of participation.

Classroom Conduct:

- **Get to class on time.** I make most important announcements in the first 5 minutes. Notify me in advance if you need to arrive late or leave early.
- **Cellphones must be off** (not on vibrate) and stowed away (not on your desk). If you need to make or receive a text or call during class time, please leave the classroom in order to do so.
- **No taking notes on computers** or audio recording lectures unless specifically authorized to do so by Disability Support Services. Studies have confirmed that people retain far more information when they write rather than type their notes. Typing up notes, even verbatim, decreases students' retention of the material presented. The use of computers has also proven distracting to the students seated *around* the computer, not just the one using it. I ban computers not because I'm an ogre or a Luddite but because I truly believe it helps you learn.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a **professional manner**. Talking when someone else is speaking, sleeping, reading non-class related materials, texting, emailing, etc., are unacceptable behaviors and will result in my asking you to leave the classroom.

Anything which distracts me or your fellow students is unacceptable. When someone has the floor, whether a fellow student, a guest, or myself, they deserve your undivided attention.

- I expect you to **demonstrate tolerance and respect** in all interactions with your classmates and professor. Disagreement is a natural, even necessary part of the learning process, and we will likely touch on sensitive topics in this class. I hope you will keep an open mind when others express opinions different from your own and approach all interactions in the spirit of intellectual curiosity. If someone offends you, give them the benefit of the doubt by assuming they did not intend to offend and either misspoke or were misinformed; respectfully help them see alternative perspectives or correct their misperceptions. However, if at any time you feel uncomfortable, insulted, or unsafe in our classroom, notify me immediately and we will work together to address the problem.
- **Don't be shy with questions**—I'm happy to answer them, big or small. However, always check the syllabus, website, and/or assignment sheets before contacting me in case the answer is already there (e.g., When is the paper due? What should I read this week?).

Office Hours:

I encourage you to attend office hours or schedule an individual appointment if those hours are not compatible with your schedule. I am always happy to talk with you about the course readings, assignments, and broader questions about American Studies. It is a pleasure to get to know you and your intellectual interests, so never hesitate to drop by with questions or to mull over something you've been thinking about.

Student Resources:

Visit <http://fdc.fullerton.edu/teaching/syllabus.php> for information on:

- Disability Support Services
- Academic Dishonesty Policy
- Emergency Preparedness
- Student Learning Goals and Outcomes
- Library Resources

Course Communication: I regularly use Titanium to communicate with you about this class, so be sure to check your student email address several times each week. I strive to reply to student queries within two business days. If you phone or email me and do not hear a reply within two business days, please re-send your message.

Technical Support: If you encounter technical problems, contact the student help desk at (657) 278-8888 or email StudentITHelpDesk@fullerton.edu. All CSUF students can also go to the [Student Genius Corner \(SGC\)](#) located in the Titan Lab (PLN- 30) for **walk-in help with technology**. Take advantage if you are having a hard time getting used to the Titanium site or your own software: they are there to help. Also, if you would like the latest version of Microsoft Office 365 or Adobe Creative Cloud, you can get **free access to software programs** through our IT page. Click [here](#) to see the many free software options available for students.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inventing false information or citations, plagiarism, and helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty. Policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced in this class; academic dishonesty of any kind will result in a failing grade on that exam or assignment and a referral to Judicial Affairs. Familiarize yourself with the academic dishonesty policy at <http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/documents/PDF/300/UPS300-021.pdf>.

Further Resources

Writing Center: Located on the first floor of Pollak Library, the Writing Center offers 30-minute, one-on-one peer tutoring sessions and workshops. Registration and appointment schedules are available at the [Writing Center webpage](#) or by calling (657) 278-3650.

University Learning Center (ULC): The ULC provides CSUF students with academic support including assistance with assignments, general study skills, and computer user needs. The ULC offers one-to-one peer tutoring, online writing review, and many more services. More information can be found on the [ULC website](#).

Disability Support Services: If you have a temporary (like a broken ankle) or permanent disability or believe you may have a disability, visit <http://www.fullerton.edu/dss/> for information about access to closer parking, note-takers, and other forms of support.

Counseling & Psychological Services: CSUF students are eligible for **free** counseling (individual, group, or couples), crisis intervention, and wellness programs. Please click here for an appointment if you feel overwhelmed this semester: <http://www.fullerton.edu/caps/>

The WoMen's Center also provides students with a variety of support opportunities for: adult re-entry students, parenting students, LGBTQ students, advocacy for issues of sexual assault, stalking and domestic violence. Please click here for more information: <http://www.fullerton.edu/womenscenter/>

Tuffy's Basic Needs: If you are facing challenges this semester regarding securing food and/or housing, please go to the Tuffy's Basic Needs office in MH-143 or click here: https://www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/tuffys_basic_needs/ In addition to on-campus housing, they offer hygiene products, gently used career clothing, and emergency grants for those who qualify.

Graduate Student Food Pantry was established to address the growing food insecurity problem among CSU grad students. The pantry is available to all graduate students through the Graduate Student Success Center (PLS 365) and offers students the use of a microwave, refrigerator, hot water pot, and coffee maker.

Project Rebound supports formerly incarcerated students and those affected by mass incarceration. You can contact them at <https://www.fullerton.edu/rebound/>

Scholarships of all types and amounts are available to CSUF students. Review the list (<http://www.fullerton.edu/financialaid/general/scholarships.php>) and apply for any and all for which you're eligible. You might not be awarded all of them, or even any of them, but it's worth a try, and you definitely won't win if you don't apply.

Reading Assignments and Class Schedule

Date	Topic
Aug. 26 & 28	Introduction: What is ethnography and how do I do it? Reading: None
Sept. 4 (No class Sept. 2)	Ethnography of U.S. Culture Reading: Caughey, "The Ethnography of Everyday Life" Chiseri-Strater & Sunstein, "Stepping In & Stepping Out" Due 9/4: "Subcultures I Belong To" and "Making the Familiar Strange"
Sept. 9 & 11	Selecting & Designing a Project Reading: Falls, <i>White Gold</i> , Introduction Bourgois & Schoenfeld, <i>Righteous Dopefiend</i> , Introduction Shapira, "Calvin's Problem: Racial Identity & Gun Ownership" Mendoza-Denton, "Muy Macha"
Sept. 16 & 18	Sample Student Ethnographies Reading: Flores, "Doing Masculinity" Ugalde, "Art and Advocacy" Downing, "Strike a Pose" Zollo, "Friday Night at Iowa 80" Anonymous, "Institutionalized Romance"
Sept. 23 & 25	No Class: Individual Meetings with Professor Reading: None
Sept. 30 & Oct. 2	Ethics & Fieldwork Relationships Reading: Duneier, <i>Sidewalk</i> , Intro., pp. 43-80, 173-216, 319-357 Due 9/30: Complete CSUF Human Research Tutorial Due 9/30: Project Proposal Draft Due 10/2: Revised Project Proposal
Oct. 7 & 9	Interviewing Reading: Wolcott, "Fieldwork: The Basic Arts" Chiseri-Strater & Sunstein, "Researching People" Warren & Karner, "Interview"

- Oct. 14 & 16 **Observing**
 Reading: Warren & Karner, "Setting"
 Herrmann, "His and Hers"
 Lane, "Rituals of Unemployment"
 Anderson, "Rittenhouse Square: The Practice of Civility"
- Oct. 21 & 23 **Analyzing & Using Secondary Sources**
 Readings: Warren & Karner, "Analysis"
 Ralph, *Renegade Dreams*, Preface and Introduction
- Oct. 28 & 30 **Ethnographic Writing**
 Reading: Ghodsee, *From Notes to Narrative*, Ch. 1-4, 6, 9-11
Due 10/30: Interview Analysis
- Nov. 4 **Editing & Revising**
 (No class Nov. 6) Reading: Chiseri-Strater & Sunstein, "Fieldwriting" (activity boxes optional)
- Nov. 13 **Preparing a Strong Draft & Overview of Peer Review Process**
 (No class Nov. 11) Reading: None
- Nov 18 & 20 **Research Paper Workshops**
- Nov. 25 **NO CLASS:** Online discussion post in lieu of in-person class
- * * * **FALL BREAK: NO CLASS 11/26-29** * * *
- Dec. 2 & 4 **Research Paper Workshops**
- Dec. 9 & 11 **Research Paper Workshops** (*class potluck 12/11 if schedule allows*)
- Dec. 18 (Wed.) **Final Research Paper Due to AMST office (Gordon Hall 313) by 4pm**