

University of Southern California
Rossier School of Education
Course Syllabus



EDHP 551: Applied Educational Ethnography
Spring 2018, Waite Phillips Hall 103 - 4:00PM-6:40PM

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Course Overview

This course is designed to familiarize graduate students with qualitative research methods through firsthand experience with ethnography. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which an ethnographic approach can inform our understanding of colleges and universities, as well as the complex social and cultural forces that shape student learning experiences, faculty and staff decision-making processes, and educational pathways. Three types of readings will inform our understanding of ethnography: 1) philosophical treatises about the nature and utility of qualitative inquiry; 2) articles that identify axiomatic ethnographic research approaches and techniques; and 3) sample research studies that employ ethnographic research practices.

Writing is fundamentally intertwined with the successful production and dissemination of ethnographic texts. Therefore, this class also includes diverse writing assignments in genres that are intended to instill a sensitivity to the appropriate modes of discourse for different social communities. Scheduled writing workshops will provide students with the opportunity for peer review and feedback from classmates, the instructor, and individuals who approach educational research from outside perspectives. Through such experiences, students will learn how to shape their writing and their findings to effectively speak with different audiences.

Course Materials

A single text is required for the course. All other materials, including articles, book excerpts, and other assorted readings, are posted on Blackboard.

Required:

- Desmond, M. (2017). *Evicted*. New York: Crown Publishers.

For additional guidance, the optional resources listed below can provide help with ethnographic research methods and the preferred citation and references style for social science research:

Optional:

- O'Reilly, K. (2005). *Ethnographic methods*. New York: Routledge.
- American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

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Class Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- articulate the ontological and epistemological assumptions associated with qualitative research and ethnography;
- outline the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative methods, as well as their value for educational inquiry;
- identify the primary theories and procedures of qualitative research;
- discuss the evolving relationship between ethnographic research and cultural studies;
- diagnose and navigate ethical and representation issues as they arise during the qualitative research process;
- apply qualitative methods and techniques, such as interviews and observations;
- interpret, analyze, and critique qualitative data; and
- convey research findings to an identified discourse community through writing.

Course Requirements

As a student in a graduate-level course, you will be challenged to complete the following tasks:

- summarize and interpret theoretical readings;
- discuss complex ideas with colleagues;
- apply concepts to fieldwork situations;
- complete a research project that demonstrates proficiency with ethnographic methods;
- adapt writing to communicate research to individuals outside academia.

Class attendance and participation is essential at every class meeting. Thoughtful responses to reading assignments and dialogue among students/professors/guest speakers are critical to the utility of the course. You will frequently be asked to prepare materials in advance for use during classroom discussions. Attendance and participation will be reflected in your final grade. In addition to weekly participation in discussions, you will be responsible for the following:

1. Facilitating classroom discussion.
2. Critiquing peer writing.

Assignments

Each of the assignments for this class are designed to develop and refine your qualitative research skills and your writing abilities. To complete these assignments, you will have the opportunity to study a topic of your choice related to the field of higher education. Your topic should be:

- Compelling (Are you *invested* in the topic? Will your findings be valuable to society?)
- Clear (Can you describe the complexities of your topic to different audiences?)
- Contained (Can you clearly identify and articulate a space to conduct research?)
- Manageable (Can you adequately research the topic in a semester?)

Class assignments are scaffolded - designed to build onto each other and culminate in a manageable final paper and op-ed. A *draft* of the final paper is due in class to allow for “writing workshops” during class.

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Class Participation

Group discussions will occur at every class meeting. Students are encouraged to ask questions and actively participate. Opportunities to gain class participation points include the following:

1. Participation during in-class discussions;
2. Providing peer feedback on writing drafts inside and outside of class; and
3. Facilitating in-class discussion about external readings with group members.

Grading

Graduate school provides the opportunity to maximize your learning. Higher learning goals aside, professors are also required to assign grades. To achieve an “A” grade in this course, you will need to demonstrate an exceptionally strong mastery of course material. Meeting instructor’s expectations merits a “B.” “C” grades or lower will be assigned to students who express minimally-acceptable performance.

Assignment Values

Class Attendance and Participation	10%
Preliminary Literature Review	5%
Background and Significance	5%
Observation	5%
Interview Protocol	5%
Interview Summary 1	5%
Interview Summaries 2 and 3	5%
Research Paper First Draft	20%
Research Paper Final Draft	20%
Op-Ed Assignment	20%

Grading Rubric

A	94–100%	A-	90–93%	B+	87–89%	B	84–86%	B	80–83%
C+	77–79%	C	74–76%	C-	70–73%	D	60–69%	F	59% and below

Academic Integrity

Graduate students and professionals ought not cheat or steal ideas from other authors or sources without giving appropriate credit and recognition to the originators of the work. Thus, any student found in violation of cheating or plagiarism will automatically receive a grade of “F” in the course.

Academic Accommodations

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-7766.

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Incompletes

IN—Incomplete (Work not completed because of documented illness or some other emergency occurring after the 12th week of the semester; arrangements for the IN and its removal should be initiated by the student and agreed to by the instructor prior to the final exam.)

IX—Lapsed Incomplete

Conditions for removing a grade of incomplete

If an IN is assigned as the student's grade, the instructor will fill out the Incomplete (IN) Completion form which will specify to the student and to the department the work remaining to be done, the procedures for its completion, the grade in the course to date, and the weight to be assigned to the work remaining to be done when computing the final grade. A student may remove the IN by completing only the portion of required work not finished as a result of documented illness or emergency occurring after the twelfth week of the semester. Previously graded work may not be repeated for credit. It is not possible to remove an IN by re-registering for the course, even within the designated time.

Time limit for removal of an incomplete

One calendar year is allowed to remove an IN. Individual academic units may have more stringent policies regarding these time limits. If the IN is not removed within the designated time, the course is considered "lapsed," the grade is changed to an "IX" and it will be calculated into the grade point average as 0 points. Courses offered on a Credit/No Credit or Pass/No Pass basis for which a mark of IN is assigned will be lapsed with a mark of NC or NP and will not be calculated into the grade point average.

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Assignment Schedule

- January 10** First Day
- January 17** Preliminary Literature Review (1-2 pages)
- January 24** Background and Significance (1-2 pages)
- January 31** Background and Significance Peer Review
- February 7** Observation and Inductive Reasoning Assignment (1-2 pages)
- February 14** Interview Protocol (1 page)
- February 21** Interview Summary 1 (2-3 pages)
- February 28** Interview Summary 1 Peer Review
- March 7** Interview Summaries 2 and 3 (2-3 pages)
- March 21** Interview Summaries 2 and 3 Peer Review
- * March 28** No Class - CIES Conference
- April 4** Research Paper First Draft (5-10 pages)
- April 11** Research Paper First Draft Peer Review
- April 18** Research Paper Final (6-8 pages)
- April 25** Op-Ed Peer Review (1-2 pages)
- May 2** Op-Ed (2 pages)

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Reading Schedule

January 10 Introduction: Ways of Reading and Knowing

Carey - How Nonsense Sharpens the Intellect
Cone - Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story
Specter - The Power of Nothing
Weinberger - The Geography of Knowledge
O'Reilly - Chapters 1-2

January 17 Culture and Observation

Baker - Observation: A Complex Research Method
Geertz - Thick Description
Iloh and Tierney - Using Ethnography to Understand 21st Century College Life
Tierney and Lanford - Research in Higher Education: Cultural Perspectives
O'Reilly - Chapter 4

January 24 Ethics and Positionality

Geertz - Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight
Geertz - From the Native's Point of View
Kent - Fieldwork that Failed
Narayan - How Native Is a "Native" Anthropologist?

January 31 The Politics of Representation

Agar - Who Are You to Do This?
Behar - What Renato Rosaldo Gave Us
Rosaldo - Grief and a Headhunter's Rage
Rosaldo - Subjectivity in Social Analysis

February 7 Interviewing

Bernard - Interviewing: Unstructured and Semistructured
Blee - White-Knuckle Research
Reich - Pregnant with Possibility
O'Reilly - Chapters 5-6

February 14 Design, Validity, and Analysis

Burawoy - The Extended Case Method
Small - How Many Cases Do I Need?
Tierney and Clemens - Qualitative Research and Public Policy

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February 21 Criticism and Institutional Review

Goffman - On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto
Hedgecoe - Reputational Risk, Academic Freedom, and Research Ethics Review
Lincoln and Tierney - Qualitative Research and Institutional Review Boards
O'Reilly - Chapter 3

February 28 Counternarratives

Cuádriz - Myths and the “Politics of Exceptionality”
Harper - Success in These Schools?
Tierney - Life History and Identity

March 7 Case Studies

Lanford and Maruco - When Job Training Is Not Enough
Posselt - Disciplinary Logics in Doctoral Admissions
Rhoads - Whales Tales, Dog Piles, and Beer Goggles

March 21 Discourse

Blackburn - Agency in Borderland Discourses
Brown and Casanova - Representing the Language of the “Other”
Lanford - “I Never Knew How to Do that Before”

*** March 28 No Class - CIES Conference**

April 4 *Evicted*, Parts 1 and 2

April 11 *Evicted*, Part 3 and Epilogue

April 18 Translating Research

Desmond - The Eviction Economy
Stephens - Tips for Aspiring Op-Ed Writers

April 25 No Readings

*** May 2 Final Exam Period**

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