Mini Ethnography Project
Anth103 • Section #14170 • Spring 2015

Mini-Ethnography Project: Total 120 points

Part One: Topic/Research Question/Hypothesis (5), Bibliography (5), Worksheet/Outline (5), Draft (5), Final (60) and Research Notes (20 pts): 100 points

- DUE February 26 (TH): Topic, Research Question, Hypothesis
- DUE March 12 (TH): Bibliography (5 sources min.)
- DUE May 7 (TH): Worksheet/Outline
- DUE May 14 (TH) Draft
- DUE May 21 (TH) Final Version (hardcopy, min. 5 pages) & Research Notes

Part Two: Oral Presentation of Research to class group: 20 points

- DUE June 2 & 4 (Last week of classes) ← Date may switch to May 26 & 28 and Final Quiz on Thursday, June 4 ←

SOME DUE DATES ARE MODIFIED FROM ORIGINAL DATE ON SYLLABUS

This assignment requires you to go out into "the world" and do an ethnographic study to explore a social or cultural issue of particular interest to you. It is not a library project. You will use ethnographic research methods to answer a research question using the Scientific Method:

1. Research Topic: (the people, place and phenomenon for research)
2. Research Question (RQ):
   What are you investigating about this topic?
   What do you want to find out?
3. Hypothesis (What is the answer you predict for your Research Question (RQ)?)
4. Research (using Ethnographic Methods)
5. Analysis of your data you gathered using your ethnographic methods. Include in your explanatory analysis of the data ("Why people do what they do"):  
   o The emic and etic perspectives
   o Your personal commentary or opinion about what you observed (your data)
   o An application of anthropological theories (You will learn these theories in the next two weeks)
6. Summary (Did your research data prove or disprove your hypothesis? Moving forward what more information would you like to know for future research? What would you would do differently if you had to do this project again?)

How to find your mini-ethnographic research project ideas. Use the “5 Ps” we discussed in class: (1) People, (2) Place, (3) Phenomenon/Practices, (4) Problem (your research question)
and (5) importance (why this topic is important/relevant…to you or to the community or to the world). Your completed worksheet will have these aspects identified.

**Possibilities for research may include:**

Something familiar: If you choose something familiar to you, an organization you belong to or your place of work, for example, try to look at it as if it were strange. Step back. Imagine that you don't know what's going on. Ask some new questions of the situation. If you choose something *unfamiliar*, try to figure out how it makes sense, what is the logic guiding it, what are the assumptions that you have to understand in order to understand what is going on.

A social event: Your project could be an analysis of a ceremony (wedding, *quinceñera*, or baptism) a social gathering, a place where people come together for one purpose only, like a bus station or a hair salon. You could look at a group that you are a member of such as a club, a performing group, a religious organization or even your work place. Or you could choose a topic with which you are not already connected. Start looking around at places where people congregate or thinking about groups that you are already a part of. Notice the Symbolic culture involved (beliefs, values) and the Material culture present (material stuff).

A cultural phenomenon: Your project could also be an analysis of a specific cultural phenomenon such as traditional healing and home remedies; the preparation of a certain ethnic or family dish; “good luck” rituals associated with playing sports or engaging in activities with a risk of failure such as gambling or sales calls; Religious practices associated with particular observances.

You will want to choose your research methods to best fit your topic, the time you have, and the kind of research questions you are investigating. Here are some possibilities:

- Participant Observation
- Observation
- Interviews
- Emailed surveys (SurveyMonkey.com has a free trial version)
- Symbolic analysis of texts (of food packaging, advertising, newspaper, public speeches or private communications…) for their cultural symbolic meaning which reflects beliefs, values and mental models of a culture
- Food diaries

You will probably use some combination of participation, observation, and interviews.

Please let your informants know that you are doing a college project and obtain permission from them to use their name (if you decide to do so) or promise to keep their identity anonymous. Please use the attached informed consent form.

**Bibliographic Sources**

Your mini-ethnographic project requires a minimum of 5 sources. At least one of the sources must be from an Academic Journal (also known as a “peer-reviewed journal” and a book. You cannot use Wikipedia as a source. Here are some ways to find your sources for your research project’s Bibliography:
How to find research data on a culture area’s Indian tribe. Here are some options:

1. **College of the Canyons Library (online search)**
   - **URL:** http://www.canyons.edu/Offices/library/Pages/Article-databases.aspx
   - Database > Username: salt Password: pepper
   - Find Books > type in tribe name (e.g. “Peru” or “Chinese rice culture”)
   - Suggested online databases to find “Academic Journals” (also known as “Peer-reviewed journals”)

2. **Wikipedia.** You can not cite Wikipedia as one of your sources but this web site usually gives a decent crowd-sourced overview of various cultural phenomena. Most of Wikipedia’s California tribe pages have links to scientific articles, books and current tribal sources of information (that you can cite).

3. **Google Scholar Search Engine:**
   - [https://scholar.google.com/](https://scholar.google.com/) (de-select “patents” and search your topic via key search terms (e.g. “soccer” or “peru tourism globalization” or “Chinese rice culture”)

4. **Major Search Engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.).** Do a search using a key search term of the tribe’s name, or geographic area and Indian cultural element. For example when I did a search for “Chinese rice symbolism” the following websites were listed (and from them I found more online sources and published sources of research articles by ethnographers and archeologists):

5. **Online booksellers.** If you want to purchase some resource books, please let me know as I can recommend several books about particular cultural theories, anthropologists and cultures/sub-cultures. Books can be purchased online at retailer and publisher web sites such as Heyday Books (specialize in California Indian-related publications), Amazon and University of California Press among others.

**Research Notes**

Whatever your method, you will need to take notes; you may take notes while observing in your research situation, or, if this is impractical, you may write down notes afterwards. But do keep a written record of your observations as you go. YOU WILL NEED TO TURN IN YOUR NOTES. These will be your actual notes in progress; you are not required to type these notes up or put them in any special format. They should be a combination of field observations and your initial assessments or organization of those topics.
Completing the Worksheet/Outline:

The worksheet below needs to be completed with the following information:
1) A precise statement of the issue(s) the project addresses; A description of the ethnographic site, group, context, event, or situation;
2) Research Question
3) A discussion of the methods you used, what you actually did in your fieldwork, and how effective those methods were. Did your ideas about your project topic change in the process of doing ethnographic fieldwork?
4) An account of your observations, what you found out, your results;
5) An analysis or interpretation of your results--what does it all mean? How do your results illuminate the question or issue you started out with? Be sure to include the emic and etic perspectives in your discussion.
6) Conclusion. Did your research prove or disprove your hypothesis?

If possible, include reflections on your process, on how you did the ethnographic work; how you made decisions about what you did ethnographically; what worked and what didn’t (and why); who you talked to and who you didn’t talk to (and why); how the methods you chose might have affected your findings; and why you think your methods were appropriate both to your research question and to your research setting.

In the case of interviews, be sure to describe your respondents in whatever way is relevant to your project (ethnicity, gender, class, age, etc).

Your project needs to include:

- A completed worksheet. Type the questions and answer them on a separate paper.

- Format: 12 point font - Times New Roman, black ink, double spaced, normal margins. If your informants do not want to be named you may refer to them as, “my informant” or “my consultant”.

- Your interview and/or observation notes. Additionally, if you include photographs, please label them accordingly.

- A signed informed consent form from your informant(s). Please see last page.

- You will share your research with other class members with a short 5-10 minute oral presentation during class time.
Name: ____________________________ Date: ____________

Topic:
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Research Question:
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Hypothesis:
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
Mini-Ethnography Project Bibliography
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Name: ______________________________ Date: ________________

➔ Bibliographical and inline text citations must be in American Anthropological Association (AAA) Style (2009):

➔ Minimum of 5 references (at least one source must be from an Academic Journal (also known as a “peer-reviewed journal” which can be found online) and another from a book.

Example inline text citations after your citation in the text of research paper*:

(Castles 1990:36)

*Inline text citations occur at the end of the sentence with the cited source just before the period mark .

Example bibliographic text citations: *

Single-Author Book:

Castles, Stephen

Co-Authored Book:

Bonacich, Edna, and John Modell

Multiple references with same author on the same year:

Gallimore, Ronald

Academic Journal
Moll, Luis C.

Newspaper or Magazine Article:

Reinhold, Robert

Websites

American Anthropological Association

American Anthropological Association

*Write or type your list of source below using Times New Roman, 12-pt font, double-spaced text following the form of the citations above (except double-spaced)

Bibliography:
Mini-Ethnography Project Worksheet/Outline

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Name: ______________________________ Date: _____________

Please copy questions and re-type them with your answers; you can also find a copy to cut and paste on my website:

1. Research Topic: ______________________________

   • Place: What is the Place (The location: campus, church, workplace, gym, clubs, internet, etc.):

   • Phenomenon: What is the Phenomenon (What is going on that is interesting to you-ritual, celebration, event, language use, art, music, a cultural practice):

   • People: Who are the People (The community: a congregation, family, team, co-workers, friends, fellow students, on-line group, club or organization, etc.):

   • Importance (Why is this topic important to you? To all of us?):

2. Research Question:

3. Hypothesis:
4. Research Methods (Observation, Participant Observation, etc.):

5. Analysis of Data:
   - What are the *emic* (cultural insider) and *etic* (cultural outsider or scientific/functionalist) interpretations of what you observed?
   - What anthropological theories (if any) did you utilize to come up with your analysis of your research data?

6. Conclusion/Summary (Did you prove or disprove your hypothesis?)
Informed Consent Form

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I, __________________________ agree to participate in research conducted by
____________________________ at __________________________ for the period of
____________________________.

I understand that interview sessions may be recorded, and that I may request that the recorder
be turned off at any time, for any reason. If not recorded, I understand notes will be taken
during the interview.

I understand that the recordings may be transcribed for the purpose of this research project,
but that they will not be further distributed without my permission.

I do / do not give permission for video recordings to be made and/or photographs to be taken.

I do / do not wish to remain anonymous in all materials produced as the result of this
fieldwork.

I do / do not give permission for primary materials (field notes, audio and video recordings) to
be made available to others (apart from the instructor of the course).

I do / do not give permission for secondary materials (such as the research paper itself) to be
made available to others (apart from the instructor of the course), or published on the internet
or in print.

Any other restrictions or specifications are listed below:

Signed by informant: __________________________

Date: __________

Signed by class member: __________________________

Date: __________