

Mini-Ethnographic Research Project

Cultural Anthropology • Anth 103 • #16631 • Fall 2015

Topic/RQ/H₁/Methodology (10), Bibliography (5), Literature Review (5), Outline (10), Draft (10), Final (10) **50 points total**

1. **DUE Mon., 9/21 Topic, Research Question, Hypothesis, Methodology**
2. **DUE Mon, 10/19 Bibliography (3 sources min.)**
3. **DUE Mon., 11/2 Literature Review**
4. **DUE Mon., 11/16 Outline**
5. **DUE Mon., 11/30 Draft Paper**
6. **DUE Mon., 12/2 Final Paper** (hardcopy, 5 pages min. including Bibliography, Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced, AAA Style)

SOME DUE DATES ARE MODIFIED FROM ORIGINAL DATE ON SYLLABUS

This assignment requires you to go out into "the world" or interview yourself in an “autoethnography”. Either way, you will do a “mini” ethnographic study to explore a social or cultural issue of particular interest to you. You will use ethnographic research methods to answer a Research Question using the Scientific Method:

1. **Topic:** What is the cultural phenomenon, culture change, folklore, or other types of culture elements you are researching? Are you researching symbolic or material culture—or elements of both? What are your biases about this topic (e.g. what do you think about this to[pic])?
2. **Research Question (RQ):**
What are you investigating about this topic? What do you want to find out?
3. **Hypothesis (H₁)**
What is the answer you predict for your Research Question (RQ)?
4. **Literature Review** What have previous researchers discovered about this topic?
5. **Methodology: What method(s) will you use to gather data to prove or disprove your hypothesis? Methods:** Observation, participant observation, interviews, online survey, kinship chart, map of built environment, social network analysis, hermeneutic or textual analysis. **Type of data:** Are you collecting quantitative data or qualitative data?
6. **Data/Research/Analysis:** Your data you gathered using secondary (and if desired primary) research methods. Include in your explanatory analysis of the data
 - What did you find out?
 - Your personal opinion about the data (or lack of data) you found.
 - According to your research and your interpretation of it why is it so?
 - What is the emic perspective? What is the etic perspective?
 - Theoretical perspective you are using to analyze the data: Functionalism, Cultural Materialism, Post-Modernism, Structural Marxism, Cultural Ecology, Sociobiology, Symbolism, etc.
7. **Summary** (Did your research data prove or disprove your hypothesis?)
8. **Bibliography** (AAA style and each entry is cited in the paper).

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:

Your diet and beliefs about food. If you choose something familiar, like the food you or your family members eat, try to look at it as if you were from another culture. Imagine that you don't eat these foods or know anything about them or the places (super market, fast food, restaurant, farm, house garden) where they were obtained.

A social event: Your Mini-Ethnography project could be an analysis of a ceremony (wedding, *quinceniara*, or baptism) or any social gathering or 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. Notice the Symbolic culture involved (beliefs, values) and the Material culture present (material stuff, buildings, clothing, cars, stuff, foods).

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 for their cultural symbolic meaning which reflects beliefs, values and mental models of a culture

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 crowd-sourced overview of various cultural phenomena with links to sources.
3. Google Scholar Search Engine:
 - <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):
 - <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2002/Oct/44854.htm> "Food Symbolism During Chinese New Year Celebrations"
 - <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2002/Oct/44854.htm> "Rice Culture of China"
 - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nian_gao "Nian Gao"
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—Preferably in the little notebook I gave you. However, you can use your own paper. 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.

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:

- **Research Paper with format in AAA Style:** 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,” “my consultant” or give an pseudonym. Min. 5 pages.
- **Your interview and/or observation notes.** Additionally, if you include photographs, please label them accordingly.
- **A signed informed consent form from your informant(s) if you interviewed anyone.** Please see last page.
- **You will share your research with other class members with a short 5-10 minute oral presentation during class time.**

Mini-Ethnography Project Topic/Research Question/Hypothesis

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Topic:

Research Question:

Hypothesis:

Methodology:

Mini-Ethnography Project Bibliography

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

https://anthromamadotcom.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/aaastyle_guide2009a.pdf

→ Minimum of 3 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

1990 Here for Good. London: Pluto Press.

Co-Authored Book:

Bonacich, Edna, and John Modell

1975 The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity: Small Business in the Japanese American Community. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Multiple references with same author on the same year:

Gallimore, Ronald

1983a A Christmas Feast. New York: Oxford University Press.

1983b Holiday Gatherings in the Pacific Northwest. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Academic Journal

Moll, Luis C.

2000 Writing as Communication: Creating Strategic Learning Environments for Students. *Theory into Practice* 25(3):202–208.

Newspaper or Magazine Article:

Reinhold, Robert

2000 Illegal Aliens Hoping to Claim Their Dreams. *New York Times*, November 3: A1, A10.

Websites

American Anthropological Association

2000[1992] Planning for the Future: Current Long-Range Plan for the American Anthropological Association. <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/lrp/lrplan.htm>, accessed January 18, 2001.

American Anthropological Association

N.d. About AAA. American Anthropological Association. <http://www.aaanet.org/about/>, accessed June 29, 2009.

Mini-Ethnography Project Worksheet/Outline

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Please copy questions and re-type them with your answers.

1. Topic:

- Place: Where were you? (Locations: websites, social media profiles, on campus, church, workplace, gym, clubs, internet, etc.)
- Phenomenon: What is the Phenomenon or context/situation of your research (What is going on that is interesting to you-ritual, celebration, event, language use, art, music, a cultural practice):
- People: Who are they? (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 others?)

2. Research Question (RQ):

3. Hypothesis (H₁):

4. Literature Review (What did you learn from your references in your bibliography?)

5. Methodology (Ethnographic research methods used such as interviews, observation, participant observation, etc.):

6. Data Collected & Analysis:

- Responses to your interview questions. If applicable, 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? (Optional)

7. Conclusion/Summary:

- Did you prove or disprove your hypothesis?
- What did you learn from your ethnographic research?

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: _____