

Field Methods in Racial and Ethnic Communities

ETHN 190/USP 129

Winter 2008

Instructor: Thuy Vo Dang

Email: t5vo@ucsd.edu

Class time: T/Th 11am-12:20pm

Location: Peterson 104

Office: SSB 249

Office Hours

Tuesday 1-2:30pm

Thursday 9:30-11am

or by appointment

Course Description

This class focuses on the training in and use of ethnography in understanding the locations of racial and ethnic communities in urban sites. Using a practical approach, we will exercise basic field methods that include actual observation and interviewing in urban communities throughout Southern California (Los Angeles-Orange County-San Diego-Riverside counties), home to highly diverse communities along lines of race, class, nationality, and sexuality. Each student will design a project and conduct an individual ethnography that will be reviewed by his/her peers. This structure will allow the class to perform a wide range of methods and explore topics in urban ethnography centering on student interests in a collaborative academic environment. The student researcher will be able to consider, among other topics, social geography, access to resources and social mobility, neighborhood and community formation and representation, cultural values, inter-ethnic relations, and group mobilization.

The course will emphasize critical, collaborative ethnographic practices from project design, through data collection, interpretation, and writing. In-class sessions will focus on developing critical reading and writing skills, contributing appropriately and extensively to class discussion, as well as giving and receiving peer feedback. In the field, students will practice critical listening, observing, and analyzing, and will also engage research through participation and conversation.

Section Information*

Section	Day	Time	Location	TA	Email	Office
A01	Tu	9:30-10:20am	SSB 103	Long Bui	ltbui@ucsd.edu	SSB 251
A02	Tu	12:30pm-1:20pm	SSB 103	Long Bui		
A03	Th	2-2:50pm	SSB 103	Ma Vang	mvang@ucsd.edu	SSB 250
A04	Th	3:30-4:20pm	SSB 103	Ma Vang		

*You must attend the section you are enrolled in. You WILL NOT receive credit for attending a different section.

Required Texts (all books are available at Groundwork Bookstore: 858.452.9625)

1. Ruth Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks Your Heart*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.
2. Rick Bonus. *Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Space*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2000.
3. Sheba George, *When Women Come First: Gender and Class in Transnational Migration*. University of California Press, 2005.
4. John Van Maanen. *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
5. Course Reader (available through University Readers: <http://www.universityreaders.com/students>)

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation:	20% (more than 2 absences will result in a failing grade)
Field Observation Paper	25%
Interview Paper	25%
Ethnography Paper (final)	30%

* Late papers and assignments will not be accepted.

* To pass this course and/or receive a final grade, all course requirements must be completed satisfactorily.

* Detailed paper guidelines will be handed out in lecture.

Schedule

*All readings must be done prior to attending the week's lectures.

INTRODUCTION TO ETHNOGRAPHY

Week 1 (Jan. 8 & 10)

- Harrison, Faye V. "Ethnography as Politics"
- Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. "Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era"
- The Vulnerable Observer, pp. 1-33.
- Tales of the Field, pp. 1-44.

Week 2 (Jan. 15 & 17)

- Ong, Aihwa. "Making the Biopolitical Subject: Cambodian Immigrants, Refugee Medicine, and Cultural Citizenship in California"
- Duong, Lan. "Desire and Design: Technological Display in the Vietnamese American Café and Karaoke Bar"
- When Women Come First, Introduction
- Locating Filipino Americans, Introduction

Week 3: Project Design (Jan. 22 & 24)

- When Women Come First, Chapter 1
- Locating Filipino Americans, Chapters 1-3
- The Vulnerable Observer, pp. 39-89.

COLLECTING DATA

Week 4: Participant Observation I: Locating Self and Subject (Jan. 29 & 31)

- Vo, Linda Trinh. "Performing Ethnography in Asian American Communities: Beyond the Insider-versus-Outsider Perspective"
- When Women Come First, Chapter 1

Week 5: Participant Observation II: Taking Field Notes (Feb. 5)

- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. "Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research"
- When Women Come First, Chapter 4

No class meeting on Thursday, Feb. 7

*Field Observation Papers due in section (5-6 pages)

Week 6: Interview I (Feb. 12 & 14)

- Locating Filipino Americans, Chapters 4, 5, Conclusion

Week 7: Interview II (Feb. 19)

- Tales of the Field, pp. 45-124.

No class meeting on Thursday, Feb. 21.

*Interview Papers due in section (5-6 pages)

WRITING ETHNOGRAPHY

Week 8: (Feb. 26 & 28)

- The Vulnerable Observer, Chapters 3 & 5
- Tales of the Field, pp. 125-144.

Week 9: (March 4 & 6)

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Writing Against Culture"
- Wolf, Margery. "Writing Ethnography: The Poetics and Politics of Culture"

*First Draft of Ethnography Paper due in section (4-5 pages)

Week 10: Revision Workshop (March 11 & 13)

*March 19: PROJECT PRESENTATION

Final Ethnography Paper due (7-8 pages)

*******Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD*******

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of "interest" yet have no information about the major or minor and don't realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, government and politics, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact Yolanda Escamilla, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor, at 858-534-3277 or yescamilla@ucsd.edu.