

The Pennsylvania State University
College of Education

ECE 572
Educational Ethnography
Fall 2010
Wednesdays 6:30-9:30 pm
209 Chamber Building

Contact Information

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 4:30-6:30 pm or by appointment

Office Location: 157 Chambers Building

Course Overview

This seminar will show students how to use ethnographic methods for education research. The course begins from the premise that schools serve as key sites for students of all ages to learn culture. We will read about education in various settings and discuss anthropological explanations of inequities experienced by minority culture communities or disadvantaged groups. Students will also carry out a mini-ethnographic study based on their area of research interest. The focus of the course will be on ethnography as a research method. It is especially designed for students to be able to conduct ethnographic studies or make use of ethnographic techniques in future research projects.

Course Reading Materials

- Educational Ethnography (you choose)
- Joseph Tobin, Yeh Hseuh, and Mayumi Karasawa, *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited: China, Japan, and the United States*, 2009
- Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, 1977
- Anne Haas Dyson, *Writing Superheroes: Contemporary Childhood, Popular Culture, and Classroom Literacy*, 1997
- William Corsaro, *We're Friends Right?: Inside Kids' Culture*, 2003
- All articles are located in PDF format on course Angel site

Assignments

1. In-Class Assignments
2. Weekly postings to class Angel site
3. Book review on educational ethnography you chose (2-4 pages)
4. Observation & Participation Field Notes
5. Interview Field Notes
6. First Draft & Final Papers – Mini-Ethnography (8-12 pages)

Grades

In-class assignments, weekly postings, book review, and field notes are credit/no credit. Letter grades will be given for first draft and final papers.

Grading Policy

A	=	95 percent and above	95-100 points
A-	=	90 to 94 percent.	90-94 points
B+	=	85 to 89 percent	85-89 points
B	=	80 to 84 percent	80-84 points
B-	=	75 to 79 percent	75-79 points
C+	=	70 to 74 percent	70-74 points
C	=	65 to 69 percent	65-69 points

Course Evaluation

In a doctoral seminar, my assumption is that you are professionals who are taking this course because you have goals and purposes that are important to you. I further assume that you will take seriously the opportunities this course offers to further your own important purposes. Put as blatantly as possible, the things that I most want to see are signs that you are making strong efforts to make this course work for you. I measure this through the following:

- Coming to each class and on-time
- Completing readings carefully and on-time
- Responding thoughtfully and collegially in postings
- Responding thoughtfully and collegially in class discussions
- Engaging with course authors and issues in your speaking and writing
- Engaging privately with me to further develop your academic and professional knowledge and skills, including theoretical thinking, writing, and leadership
- High quality leadership of seminar discussions
- Competent completion of your final project

I reserve the right to assign a grade other than “A” in the event that I have reservations about your performance in the class (as outlined above) throughout the semester or in your final project. If I have reservations about your course involvement, I will email or talk to you. You will also have my feedback to your work. If you have any questions about my assessment of your performance in the class, it is your responsibility to talk to me.

Course Expectations

1. Weekly, on-time attendance. PSU Policy: *It is the policy of the University that class attendance by students be encouraged and that all instructors organize and conduct their courses with this policy in mind. A student should attend every class for which the student*

is scheduled and should be held responsible for all work covered in the courses taken. In each case, the instructor should decide when the class absence constitutes a danger to the student's scholastic attainment and should make this fact known to the student. A student whose irregular attendance causes him or her, in the judgment of the instructor, to become deficient scholastically, is at risk of receiving a failing grade or receiving a lower grade than the student might have secured had the student been in regular attendance. You are expected to be in communication with me about absences. All students have one excused absence, no questions asked. After that, we need to talk.

2. This is a seminar class, heavily dependent upon discussion. You must complete the reading prior to class and be prepared to participate. If you feel that the classroom dynamics are not giving you a structure that allows you to participate effectively, please discuss it with me. This is information I want to receive.

Diversity Statement:

Within our classroom, there is tremendous diversity of life, cultural and emotional experience, some that might seem obvious and some that might be subtler. I expect each member of the class to demonstrate respect for persons from shared and different backgrounds and perspectives. I intend that all students will be well served by this course, that each student's reasonable learning needs will be addressed in and out of class, and I will treat the diversity of experiences and strengths each person brings to class as a resource, strength, and benefit. Having said this, I know that it is not possible to know ahead of time how to serve each person and I am resistant to making assumptions about anyone's experiences, interests, or needs. Therefore, it is important that 1) each member of the class accepts responsibility for the creation of an environment that addresses our diverse interests and needs; and 2) that anyone who feels that personal or general diversity concerns are not being adequately addressed by me or by any members of the class makes those concerns known to me. If you require special accommodation, please make this known to me.

Statement of Compliance with ADA

In order to address the special request to facilitate learning of any students with disabilities, including those with hearing and sight loss, it is necessary for those students to inform the course instructor who will bring these requests to the attention of the Administrative Assistant.

Penn State Academic Integrity Policy (Senate policy 49-20)

Plagiarism, cheating, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, tampering with the academic work of others and other forms of academic dishonesty may lead to lowered grades, failure of the course or more severe measures, depending on judgments of the gravity of the individual case.

College of Education Academic Integrity Policy

<http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/current-students/academic-integrity/>

The Academic Integrity Committee addresses unresolved cases of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information or citations, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of examination, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, and tampering with the academic work of other students.

Tentative Schedule (Instructor reserves right to make changes)

Aug 25

Introduction to the course

- What is culture? What is ethnography? What is educational ethnography?
- Some of definitions of ethnography from ethnographers
- “Kindergartens for the Deaf in Three Cultures” presentation
- Choose educational ethnography you want to read
- Reading: Vicky Grube, “Oh Boy Comics! A Reflexive Ethnography of Comics and Childhood,” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 10(3), pp. 238-242, 2010
- *Tales from the Jungle: Malinowski* video

Sept 1

What makes an ethnography an ethnography?

- Reading: Bronislaw Malinowski, The subject, method, and scope of this inquiry,” Introduction to *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, pp. 3-25, 1922/1961.
- Further Reading: Richard Handler, “Boasian Anthropology and the Critique of American Culture,” *American Quarterly*, 42(2), pp. 252-273, 1990
- Further Reading: George Spindler (Ed.), “Anthropology and Education Overview,” *Education and Anthropology*, pp. 1-22, 1955.
- Why do people agree to be studied by anthropologists? What about education do anthropologists want to study? Why study education from an anthropological perspective?
- *Tales from the Jungle: Mead* video

Sept 8

Socialization, Acculturation, and Initiation

- Reading: Margaret Mead, “Selections from *Coming of Age in Samoa*,” *Child and Youth Care Forum*, 24(1), pp. 206-213, 1928/1995
- Reading: Margaret Mead, “The School in American Culture,” *Society*, 39(1), pp. 54-62, 1950/2001
- Further Reading: Lawrence Cremin, “Public Education and the Education of the Public,” *Teachers College Record*, 109(7), pp. 1545-1558, 1975/2007

- Further Reading: Ray McDermott & Jason Raley, “From Dewey to an Anthropology of Education, *Teachers College Record*, 109(7), pp. 1820-1835, 2007
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of ethnography as a method?
- *Four Families* – Margaret Mead video (India & France)

Sept 15

Cultural Relativism as Ethic and Epistemology

- Reading: Clifford Gertz, “Anti Anti-Relativism,” *American Anthropologist*, 86(2), pp. 263-278, 1984
- Reading: Melford Spiro, “Cultural Relativism and the Future of Anthropology,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 1(3), pp. 259-286, 1986
- Further Reading: Frank Hartung, “Cultural Relativity and Moral Judgments,” *Philosophy of Science*, 21(2), pp. 118-126, 1954
- How does cultural relativism affect the ethnographic method?
- *Four Families* – Margaret Mead video (Japan & Canada)

Sept 22

Educational Ethnography

- Reading: Your chosen educational ethnography
- Further Reading: Margaret Eisenhart, “Educational Ethnography Past, Present, and Future: Ideas to Think With,” *Educational Researcher*, 30(8), pp. 16-27, 2001
- Due: Book review
- Due: Observation & Participation Field Notes

Sept 29

Marxist Educational Ethnography

- Reading: Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor*
- What is the role of schools in American culture?

Oct 6*

Classroom Ethnography

- Reading: Anne Haas Dyson, *Writing Superheroes*
- How does education happen in and out of the classroom?

Oct 13

Comparative Educational Ethnography/Video Ethnography

- Reading: Joseph Tobin, *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited*
- Due: Interview Field Notes
- *P3CR* – Joe Tobin videos (China, Japan, and the United States)

Oct 20

Adapting Teaching to Culture/Explaining Underachievement

- Reading: Evelyn Jacob & Catherin Jordan, “Explaining the School Performance of Minority Students,” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 18(4), pp. 259-261, 1987
- Reading: Frederick Erickson, “Transformation and School Success: The Politics and Culture of Educational Achievement,” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 18(4), pp. 335-356, 1987

- Reading: John D'Amato, "The Belly of the Beast: On Cultural Differences, Castelike Status, and the Politics of School," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 18(4), pp. 357-360, 1987

Oct 27

Post-Colonial Perspectives on Ethnography

- Reading: Edward Said, "Selections from *Orientalism*," pp. 1-110, Vintage Books, 1978/2003
- Reading: Julie Kaomea, "Indigenous Studies in the Elementary Curriculum: A Cautionary Hawaiian Example," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 36(1), pp. 24-42, 2005

Nov 3

Multisite Ethnography

- Reading: George Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multisite Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, pp. 95-117, 1995
- Due: First Draft Paper

Nov 10

Culture and Disability

- Reading: Ray McDermott & Herve Varenne, "Culture 'as' Disability," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 26(3), pp. 324-348, 2005
- Reading: H.G. Wells, "The Country of the Blind," *A Penn State Electronic Classics Series Publication*, pp. 376-399, 2004

Nov 17*

Childhood/Adolescent Cultures and Subculture

- Reading: William Corsaro, *We're Friends Right?*

Nov 24

No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec 1

Autoethnography/Ethnographic Fiction

- Reading: Joseph Valente, Selections from *d/Deaf and d/Dumb*

Dec 8

Final Class – Party

- Due: Final Paper