ANTHROPOLOGY 9201A-001

Research Methods in Sociocultural Anthropology

Fall 2021

COURSE OUTLINE

Professor:	Dr. Karen Pennesi (she/her)
E-mail:	pennesi@uwo.ca
Office hours:	Wednesdays 1:30 – 2:30 pm or by appointment
Credit value:	0.5
Class Time:	Fridays 9:30-12:30
Location:	SSC 3227

Calendar Description: This course offers an introduction to a range of issues related to the practice of anthropological and ethnographic research. Among the topics we will be addressing through readings, presentations and discussions are research design, ethics, and the advantages and limitations of different approaches to data collection, analysis and presentation of results. Assignments will require students to conduct an original research project in teams.

Course Syllabus:

This course offers an introduction to the basics of research design and the techniques and methods used in anthropological and ethnographic research. My approach to this course is to give students as many opportunities as possible to actively engage in learning. This includes selecting reading materials, presenting ideas, and conducting a team research project in collaboration with a community partner. You will complete a series of assignments, some individually and some as a group. Through readings, presentations and discussions in the classroom, we will address topics including: the nature of anthropological research, research questions and design, ethics, and the collection, management and analysis of different kinds of data. The team project will provide a common experience from which to draw during class discussions and students are encouraged to contribute considerations from their own research as well.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings can be found on the last page of this document.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Critically evaluate anthropological research methods in specific contexts of application
- Identify ethical issues involved in the research process
- Conduct research on a topic in sociocultural anthropology in teams and individually
- Effectively communicate research findings to academic and non-academic audiences

Course Materials:

Required Readings

Mannik, Lynda and Karen McGarry (eds.) 2017. *Practicing Ethnography: A Student Guide to Method and Methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. [Available electronically through "Course Readings" on OWL or for purchase from the usual booksellers.]

Other required readings are available on OWL in the "Course Readings" tab.

Students will select and read additional relevant sources in preparation for assignments.

Software and Equipment

NVivo qualitative data analysis software is required to complete the team research project. Depending on public health measures related to COVID-19, you should have access to the software on lab computers in our department (SSC 3315) and on most computers in the Social Science graduate student computer rooms, as well as on other computers in Weldon Library. If it turns out that you do not have access to campus computers, or if you want your own copy of the software, you can purchase a one-year student license for your personal computer for $40 from the Campus Computer Store.

Western students can create online surveys for free using Qualtrics. SurveyAct is another option, which is freely available online and not affiliated with Western.

The department has digital voice recorders available to borrow for students who have access to campus. A $50 deposit is required; the full amount will be returned when the recorder is returned intact.

Evaluation:

Timeline and Summary of Assignments:

Weekly – Participation (10%)

11 Sept. – TCPS2 CORE ethics certificate (not graded)

25 Sept. or 2 Oct. – Methods Presentation (15%)

9 Oct. – Scope of Work (pass/fail)

20 Nov. – Field Notes and Vignette (15%)

4 Dec. – Team Project Deliverables (25%)

4 Dec. – Individual Contribution to Project (20%)

11 Dec. – Critical Evaluation (15%)

Research Ethics Training

Students will be conducting research with human participants as part of this course and therefore must complete the online training modules on research ethics developed from the Tricouncil Policy Statement (TCPS) for the Panel on Research Ethics of the Government of Canada. The certificate of completion must be submitted before research can begin, ideally in the first two weeks of class. You must complete the TCPS2 CORE modules (1-8). Here is a link to register and begin the TCPS2 CORE modules. Look for the large purple "login" button on the bottom right. Once you have your certificate, upload it to OWL > Assignments.

Participation – 10%

Attendance and participation in class activities and group discussions is fundamental to the learning experience for both you and your classmates. For this reason, this class will

be organized around weekly, synchronous "live" meetings using the Zoom videoconferencing application. Expectations for participation include attending all weekly meetings, reading the assigned material and completing any other preparations, and engaging in discussions and other in-class activities in a meaningful way. Expressing differences of opinion is encouraged, while maintaining an atmosphere of respect at all times. Students who feel comfortable talking in a group situation should refrain from dominating class discussions. Students who prefer to listen more of the time should still contribute to every class.

Research Methods Presentation – 15%

In Weeks 3 and 4, each student will make a presentation to the class about a particular research method. This distributes the workload so that individuals do not have to read in depth about every method but everyone still benefits from the discussion of key issues. This also means that the team will have at least one "expert" on each method, which you may employ in the team project. It is expected that individuals will do further reading on specific methods that they plan to use and we will discuss some in more depth as the course proceeds. These presentations are intended to be an overview to begin the conversation about designing the team project and your own projects.

You will choose one of the methods listed below. If there is another method you would like to explore, please check with the professor.

- Participant observation
- Individual interviews and oral histories (structured and semi-structured)
- Focus group discussions (compared to group interviews)
- Surveys (written, online)
- Ethnography in virtual/online communities
- Photo-elicitation, photovoice
- Participatory Action Research

You will do some library research on your selected method and choose three sources which you find especially helpful. The three sources will obviously have some overlap but there should be something distinct about each one you select. One source should be primarily explanatory, describing what the method is and how it works. One source should be a good example of how the method was used in practice. The other source can be either a critique or another version of one of the first two types. You will write an annotated bibliography of the three sources and upload a copy on OWL for your classmates and the professor 24 hours before your presentation. The annotations should be about 300 words each and should describe (1) the main ideas of the source and (2) any essential points you think people should keep in mind when using that method. At the end of the annotations, you can also list up to ten other relevant sources you consulted and recommend (without annotations).

One place to start your search is in the *Practicing Ethnography* textbook, checking out the References and the Recommended Readings section at the end of each chapter. You can also consult the Recommended Readings on pages 6-9 of this syllabus, where I have selected relevant sources that are available through Western Libraries or online.

In your presentation, you will draw from all your readings to (1) briefly explain the main aspects of what the method involves, (2) describe the advantages or unique insights the method provides, and (3) outline any limitations or caveats. This is meant to be a synthesis of what you found; do not simply read your three annotations aloud. You will then lead a discussion prompted by ideas and questions that arose from your reading. Imagine yourself using that method for your own research or in the team project or in another context. What questions or concerns would you have in getting started or carrying it out? You should prepare some questions or issues for the class to discuss. (You are encouraged to run your questions by the professor before the presentation date for feedback to ensure a productive discussion.) In total, we will devote 30-40 minutes

to each presentation. Your talk should be no more than 10 minutes to leave at least 20 minutes for discussion.

The goal of this assignment is for each student to end up with a set of annotated bibliographies on a variety of anthropological research methods that can be used for future reference when designing a project. Students should produce a set of their own notes on important issues and recommendations from the discussions to supplement the bibliographies they receive.

Scope of Work – 5%

In the first class, students will be introduced to the community partner representative for the team research project. This year, it will be Garry Atkinson from the [Women's Executive Network](#) (WXN). After the initial meeting, the students will arrange a separate meeting to discuss the research goals, specific tasks to be completed, timeline for research activities, and final product or "deliverable". The team will write a "Scope of Work" document describing the research plan. Guidelines for writing the Scope of Work are posted on OWL > Project Materials. Be sure to specify which student researcher will be responsible for each task. This document should be created in collaboration with the partner and/or approved by the partner (depending on how much involvement they want in the process). Once the Scope of Work is accepted by the partner, it should be submitted to the professor. The Scope of Work is worth 5% of the course grade and the entire team will receive the same grade. It is due on or before **9 October** to allow sufficient time to carry out the project.

Field Notes and Vignette – 15%

You will submit a sample of your field notes from the team project. Guidelines for how to prepare field notes will be provided on OWL. Your notes will be graded on completeness, level of detail and insight, and adherence to the specified format. This is worth 7.5% of the course grade. Based on your notes, you will write a narrative (vignette) of about 500 words that illustrates a significant theme or aspect of the research. Further instructions for writing the vignette will be provided on OWL. This is worth 7.5% of the course grade and is due on **13 November**.

Individual Contribution to Team Project – 10%

Each student will be responsible for completing work on the team project. Individual contributions should be outlined in the Scope of Work. You should also create an internal document or spreadsheet (not shared with the partner) which describes more specifically what each person does in a log form with dates, names and tasks. You can create this log using whatever platform the group finds effective, as long as it allows the professor to monitor progress of the project. Some options include the Wiki function in OWL, a basic blog on a free host, a Google Doc, or a document on the Western One Drive. As long as it is well organized, the "look" is not so important since it is an internal document. I am interested in the content so I can adequately evaluate individual contributions. The first log entry should describe the role of each student and their planned tasks or responsibilities. (Teams work most effectively and efficiently when work is divided up rather than expecting everyone to do everything together.) The subsequent entries can be brief, stating the date and duration of the activity, individual names of researchers involved, and a few words describing the activity. The last log entry should have a summary of tasks completed by each person. This log and the Scope of Work will be the primary means by which individual contributions will be assessed so it is your responsibility to make sure that your contributions and any changes to the assignment of roles are noted accurately.

Your grade will be assigned at the end of the course based on the amount of work you did in relation to other team members, the quality of your work, and your general attitude as a member of the team as observed by the professor.

While it is normal for certain individuals to emerge as leaders and others to step back, keep in mind that everyone is expected to participate in the development of the project and to respect the contributions of others. Good leaders don't just do everything themselves to make sure it gets done right; they make room for others to step up and take responsibility. Meanwhile, effective team members don't wait to let others do the work first; they take initiative in completing tasks and offer ideas whenever they can, not just when asked.

Team Project Deliverables – 30%

Your team will present its findings in two formats. One will depend on what the community partner wants as an outcome of the project, as specified in the Scope of Work. For example, if it is a written report, you will submit to the professor an identical copy of what you submit to the partner to be graded. The second format will be different from what you submitted to the partner and you will present this in the weekly research seminar that all graduate students attend on 3 December. For example, if you submit a written report to the partner, you may make a poster or an oral conference-style presentation to the class. You may choose other formats, which we will discuss in Week 12. Together the deliverables will be worth 25% of the course mark and all team members will receive the same grade. The content of the deliverables should be largely the same since you are presenting your findings, however, you may divide the work of preparing these among the team members. Once the project is finished, the community partner will be asked to complete a short evaluation of the team's work and the final product. This evaluation will be worth 5% of the total course mark and all team members will receive the same grade. The deliverable is due by **3 December** to allow time for feedback from the professor before submitting it to the partner. The final version should be submitted to the partner by **9 December**.

Critical Evaluation of Project Methods – 15%

When the project is finished, each student will write a short essay (1500-2000 words) critically evaluating the methods used in the team project. You will describe what worked well and what was problematic, and reflect on why that was the case. Be sure to write about data analysis as well as data collection. You will discuss the limitations and constraints that affected this project and then propose an alternative methodology that could be used if resources were unlimited. Comment on how the proposed methodology might yield improved or different results. One third of your essay should be taken up with a critical reflection on the process of doing team research and what you learned from both positive and negative aspects of the experience. You can submit this essay any time after the deliverable has been submitted to the partner, with an absolute deadline of **10 December**.

Institutional Statements and Policies:

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#).

Statement on Accommodation, Illness Reporting and Academic Considerations

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological

and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are not met, students will need to provide a [Student Medical Certificate (SMC)](#) (if the absence is medical) or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty**.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course.

Course Specific Statements and Policies

Statement Concerning Online Etiquette

Some components of this course will involve online interactions. To ensure the best experience for everyone, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- Join the meeting on time.
- Use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet).
- Ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions, in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material.
- To minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise.
- It is your choice whether to turn on your video camera during the meeting, however, you are encouraged to have it on when it is your turn to speak.
- Be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor's request if the internet connection becomes unstable.
- Unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting.

General considerations for online interactions:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the people you interact with.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter among your classmates and the research participants.

Use of Recordings:

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor.

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Statement on Backing up Your Work:

Make sure to regularly back up all your work on an external site (such as the Western One Drive, an external hard drive, send it to yourself in e-mail, cloud, etc.) in case your computer crashes or is stolen. This should be standard practice for anything you do on your computer. No extensions for any assignments will be granted because of computer malfunctions or lost files.

Guidelines for Written Assignments

All written assignments should follow the guidelines below.

- Formatting: double-spaced, 12 point font, 2.5 cm margins, separate title page, number all pages except the title page
- References cited according to Chicago Manual of Style (Author-Date)
- Cite sources in text body and in reference list
- Evaluation criteria will be provided by the professor for each assignment; be sure to consult these when completing your work
- If the community partner specifies alternate formatting or other requirements for your final deliverable, follow those instead.

Recommended Readings (all available through Western Libraries or online)

Books

Berger Gluck, Sherna and Daphne Patai (eds.) 1991. Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History. London and New York: Routledge.

Bernard, Russell. 2018. Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. 6th Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Briggs, Charles. 1986. Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cerwonka, Allaine and Liisa Malkki. 2007. Improvising Theory: Process and Temporality in Ethnographic Fieldwork. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chilisa, Bagele. 2012. Indigenous Research Methodologies. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. Ch. 7 "Decolonizing the Interview Method" and Ch. 8: "Participatory Research Methods".

Davies, Martin. 2007. Doing a Successful Research Project: Using Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Davies, J. and D. Spencer (eds.) 2010. Emotions in the Field: the Psychology and Anthropology of Fieldwork Experience. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Denzin, Norman and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.) 2017. The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Faubion, J. and George Marcus (eds.) 2009. Fieldwork Is Not What It Used to Be. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Given, Lisa (ed.) 2008. The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods. [see the intriguing entries on arts-based research, among others]

Guest, Greg, Kathleen MacQueen, and Emily Namey. 2012. Applied Thematic Analysis. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Guest, Greg, Emily Namey and Marilyn Mitchell. 2013. Collecting Qualitative Data: A Field Manual for Applied Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. [Chapter 6 describes several different methods for collecting data for use with individuals and groups, and gives appropriate contexts for use. Available in Course Readings on OWL.]

Kirby, Sandra and Kate McKenna. 1989. Experience, Research, Social Change: Research from the Margins. Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.

Kvale, Steinar. 1996. InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Marcus, George. 1998. Ethnography through Thick and Thin. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Nolan, Riall (ed.) 2013. A Handbook of Practicing Anthropology. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Robben, A. and J. Sluka (eds.) 2007. Ethnographic Fieldwork: an Anthropological Reader. Malden: Blackwell Publishers.

Silverman, David. 2013. Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook. 4th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Journals

Field Methods

International Journal of Qualitative Methods

International Journal of Social Research Methodology

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography

Journal of Mixed Methods Research

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative Research

Social Science Research

Sociological Methods and Research

Articles

Briggs, Charles. 2007. "Anthropology, Interviewing and Communicability in Contemporary Society." Current Anthropology 48(4): 551-580.

Kemmis, Stephen and Robin McTaggart. 2005. "Participatory Action Research: Communicative Action and the Public Sphere," in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.) The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 559-603.

McHugh, Maureen. 2014. "Feminist Qualitative Research: Toward Transformation of Science and Society." In Patricia Leavy (ed.) The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199811755.013.014. [Available online through Western Libraries]

Sandelowski. 2001. Real Qualitative Researchers Do Not Count: The Use of Numbers in Qualitative Research. Research in Nursing and Health 24(3): 230-240.

Smithson, Janet. 2000. "Using and Analyzing Focus Groups: Limitations and Possibilities," International Journal of Social Research Methodology 3(2): 103-119.

Websites

A good overview of qualitative research

A good overview of sampling

Human Relations Area Files

Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2014)

Schedule:

Week	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments
1	10 Sept.	Introductions Team Project and introduction to partner	Mannik and McGarry: Introduction, Ch. 1 ARC 2020 by WXN	Online training for TCPS2 CORE ethics certificate
2	17 Sept.	Developing Research Questions; Rapid Qualitative Inquiry; Working in Teams	Silverman: Ch. 6 Beebe 2014	

Week	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments
3	24 Sept.	Participant Observation; Surveys; Interviews; Focus Groups	Mannik and McGarry: Ch. 2, 4 Guest, Namey & Mitchell: Ch. 5 Bernard: p. 195-222	Methods Presentations
4	1 Oct.	Ethnography online; Photographs; Participatory Action Research; Sampling	Mannik and McGarry: Ch. 8, 10, 12 Guest, Namey & Mitchell: Ch. 2	Methods Presentations
5	8 Oct.	Additional Methods of Qualitative Data Collection; Project Specific Topic	Guest, Namey & Mitchell: Ch. 6 Also choose one chapter from: "A Different Kind of Ethnography" "networking" reading TBD	Scope of Work
6	15 Oct.	Notes; Documentation; Organizing Data; Transcription	Mannik and McGarry: Ch. 5; NVivo Manual and Tutorials for Start-up	Install NVivo
7	22 Oct.	Indigenous Methodologies	Chilisa (2020): Ch. 11, 12, 14; Tuhiwai Smith (2012): Ch. 3, 8	
8	29 Oct.	Ethical Issues	Mannik and McGarry: Ch. 3 more on OWL	Prep for discussion questions in class; see OWL for instructions
	5 Nov.	NO CLASS	READING WEEK	
9	12 Nov.	Data Analysis	Mannik and McGarry: Ch. 6	Field Notes and Vignette
10	19 Nov.	Project Workshop: data analysis with NVivo during class	NVivo Manual and Tutorials	Have some project files to work on in NVivo
11	26 Nov.	Presenting Findings; Knowledge Mobilization	Mannik and McGarry: Ch. 7, 9	
12	3 Dec.	Presentation of Project Results Reflection		Project Deliverables to Prof. on 3 Dec.; to WXN by 9 Dec. Critical Evaluation due 10 December