Description and Objectives
This seminar will introduce you to the basics of research design and the techniques and methods used in ethnographic data collection and analysis through a series of assignments. Some of these (1, 2 and 7) will let you concentrate specifically on your individual research project while others (3, 4, 5 and 6) will have you working in small groups to contribute to a group research project we will call “The Coffee Break Project.” The latter set of assignments will familiarize you with standard field practices – from participant observation to interviewing—while allowing you to learn about key software applications designed for gathering, coding, and analyzing qualitative data (NVivo and Survey Monkey). The question of ethics will come up throughout the seminar but Week 10 will be entirely dedicated to this important subject.

Required Equipment and Software
NVivo is available at four lab computers in our department and at four computers in the Social Science lab downstairs. It is strongly recommended that you purchase a temporary student license, if you can.

For Assignment 3, you will require a recording device and it is recommended that you buy your own digital recorder if you are planning to conduct interviews for your own research. You can use your phone for the interview exercise but make sure that you can import the resulting audio file into NVivo (the software only accepts certain formats and size can be a problem).

For Assignment 5, which will be a group exercise, we will be using the departmental license of Survey Monkey.

Participation
It is expected that everyone will participate in group discussions and contribute equally to various facets of the group research project. Expressing differences of opinion is encouraged but an atmosphere of respect must be maintained at all times. Students who feel comfortable talking in a group situation should refrain from dominating class discussions and be mindful of those who may be shy but have valuable contributions to make.
Graduate Student Health & Wellness at Western

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western’s Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. For example, please check out the Faculty of Music web page [http://www.music.uwo.ca/](http://www.music.uwo.ca/), and our own McIntosh Gallery [http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/](http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/). Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at [http://www.health.uwo.ca/](http://www.health.uwo.ca/). Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html).

Main Sources


*Note:* You do not need to purchase these books or manuals. They are available online and through the library. Whenever possible, they will be shared via the class Dropbox.

### MEANS OF EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Research Project</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1 “In Search of Methods” (Week 2)</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2 “The Research Plan” (Week 4)</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 7 “Elevator Pitch” (Week 13)</td>
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The Coffee Break Project

Assignment 3 “Interviews” (Week 5) 15%
Assignment 4 “Participant Observation” (Week 6) 10%
Assignment 5 “The Survey” (Week 8) 10%
Assignment 6 “Analysis and Report” (Week 12) 25%

Participation
Contributions to class discussion 10%

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

WEEK 1 (JANUARY 8): INTRODUCTION

- Review of course requirements
- Brief discussion of your research interests

Homework: Find at least 2 sources pertinent to your research topic. These sources can be academic articles or books you have read prior to our meeting. Clearly identify the key questions/debates explored in these sources and the methods and data used by each author. Note these down in point form and include one or two examples on a sheet of paper. Make seven copies of this sheet of paper (one for the professor, one for you and the remainder for five other students) and bring to class on Week 2, along with the sources cited. Come prepared to discuss your findings critically in small groups of 4-5 students and with the entire class.

WEEK 2 (JANUARY 15): STARTING POINTS

- Submit your notes for Assignment 1 to the professor and discuss them with 4-5 other students in the class reflecting on whether, in your opinion, the authors chose the “right” data and methods to explore their research questions. With the help of others in the group consider how the questions, methods and data relate to each other and discuss how else the question or the data could have been approached (60 minutes).

- Present your initial thoughts on the sources you selected and discuss any new insights derived from your group discussion with the whole class (10 minutes per student). In your presentation you should succinctly outline your M.A. or Ph.D. research question or topic and link these to current academic and/or public debates (re: literature review).

- Note: Your initial notes and your in-class discussion of what you learnt from this exercise constitute Assignment 1 (“In Search of Methods”)

Required Readings:

Homework: Prepare for Assignment 2 ("The Research Plan") by writing a short 1 page summary of your planned research project that clearly states (1) your research question or topic, (2) describes how you will map your “field” and lists where, when, with whom (or with what) you will be working with. Prior to the next class, no later than January 20 by 10 am, place your research summary in the class Dropbox. Take time to read over other people’s postings and be prepared to give your feedback on each project during class discussion.

WEEK 3 (JANUARY 22): RESEARCH DESIGN

- General discussion/questions on research summary submissions (10 minutes per project).
- Brief discussion of ethics protocols.
- Debate on different ways of delineating “the field” and mapping the context/s you might be working in.
- In groups of 4-5 students spend an hour discussing the relevance of the week’s readings for your own research, identifying the most appropriate field site/s and clarifying who or what (populations, institutions, places, human-non human assemblages, geographical scales, temporal shifts, etc.) you will be focusing on.
- Introduction to NVivo: Creating a project, importing text and audio files.

Required Readings:

Recommended Reading:

Homework: Revise your original 1 page summary of your planned research project integrating some of the feedback you received in class. Submit a copy of Assignment 2 to the professor over the email no later than January 27 at 10 am.

WEEK 4 (JANUARY 29) ASKING QUESTIONS: THE INTERVIEW

- Introduction to our class research project (The Coffee Break Project) started by the 2015 class.
- As a group, brainstorm on different ways to approach The Coffee Break Project. Identify a few questions you would like to explore and decide on your target population, the kind of information you are after, the interview questions that might get you the answers you are interested in, and the kind of variables (age, gender, employment status, income, place of origin, etc.) that might make a difference to the answers you collect. By the end of the class, students should have agreed on a short semi-structured interview schedule that will be used by all in Assignment 3.
• Introduction to transcribing interviews in NVivo.

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Homework: Start working on Assignment 3. Using the list of questions agreed upon by the group conduct an interview for The Coffee Break Project. Create a standalone project in NVivo and give it a distinctive title to distinguish it from other projects. Import the digital audio file for your interview and transcribe using NVivo. Place your project with the transcribed interview into the class Dropbox by February 4 at 10 am. Note: Allow time for unexpected technical difficulties.

WEEK 5 (FEBRUARY 5) PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND SO MUCH MORE

• Fieldnotes, diaries, maps, photography, internet sources, etc.
• Brainstorm on additional sources of information you could contribute to The Coffee Break Project.
• Merge all individual projects into a single Coffee Break Project in NVivo.
• Pair up to begin thinking about Assignment 4 (decide where and when you and a research partner will conduct your participant observation exercise).

Note: No required readings this week to make up for extra homework.

Homework: (1) With your chosen research partner and following the guidelines given by the professor engage in participant observation at your selected site/s. Keep individual notes on your observations and drawing on them within a day create a narrative that gives the reader an overall sense of what you observed. This narrative could focus on the use of space, body language, specific actions, exchanges, etc. To complete Assignment 4 (i) submit your individual narrative along with your rough notes to the professor and (ii) import the narrative into our common Coffee Break Project by February 10 at 10 am. (2) Read over yours and other student’s interviews. On a clean sheet of paper list key themes that you see emerging from the interviews. Make an extra copy of this list to submit to the professor and bring to class on February 12 (this will be part of the discussion on Week 6).

WEEK 6 (FEBRUARY 12) INTRODUCTION TO CODING AND ANALYSIS

• Brief discussion of themes emerging from interview submissions.
• Thinking through narratives and texts.
• Coding audio, texts and photographs in NVivo.
• Begin coding the interviews for Coffee Break Project. Create a case node for your interviewee using a pseudonym and be sure to enter value of attributes.

Required Readings:

Homework: Finish coding the interview and import and code relevant data (photographs, fieldnotes, etc.).

WEEK 7 (NO CLASSES, FAMILY DAY AND READING BREAK, FEB 16-20)

WEEK 8 (FEBRUARY 26) ASKING QUESTIONS: THE SURVEY

• In groups of 4-5 and drawing on readings for the week, brainstorm to create a survey questionnaire to supplement the information you collected via the interviews.

• Working with Survey Monkey, create a survey and send it to everyone in the class, including yourself, to test it. Hone the questionnaire as required, type the final questions and submit them to the professor during class as part of Assignment 5.

Note: Be sure to include the names of those who designed the survey together as part of your submission.

• As a class, decide on a final set of survey questions to be sent over the email to members of the department (potential respondents will be given about a week to complete the questionnaire).

Required Readings:
or

WEEK 9 (MARCH 4) IDENTIFYING THEMES, PATTERNS, AND GAPS

• Review your coding to date in The Coffee Break Project and learn how to conduct queries in NVivo.

• Consider the survey results. Import them into NVivo and start coding responses.

• Discuss initial impressions on patterns, contradictions, exceptions, etc., reflected in the data collected.

Required reading:
Homework: Conduct several queries in NVivo and reflect on all data gathered for The Coffee Break Project. Keep track of queries that prove productive and those that lead nowhere or reveal contradictory/puzzling results. Try to refine your searches as you proceed filtering out different variables to better understand the particularities of your findings. Start brainstorming for your final report and save any query results, tables or diagrams that you might want to attach to it.

WEEK 10 RESEARCH ETHICS (MARCH 11)

- Jointly with bio-archaeology cohort debate a range of research scenarios that pose different ethical dilemmas.
- Brainstorm on potential ethical problems you might encounter during your research.

Required Readings (Select two short readings from the following list or bring your own set of relevant readings to class):
Crpanzano, V. 2010. “‘At the heart of the discipline’ Critical reflections on fieldwork” in Emotions in the Field.

Recommended Reading:

Homework: Finish conducting queries in NVivo and begin writing your report on The Coffee Break Project.

WEEK 11 (MARCH 18) TAKING A CRITICAL LOOK AT OUR METHODS

- Debate on the advantages and disadvantages of participant observation, interviewing and surveys.
- Consider non-traditional ways of doing ethnographic research.

Required Reading:
Marcus, G. 2009. “Notes toward an ethnographic memoir of supervising graduate research through anthropology’s decades of transformation” in Fieldwork is not What it Used to Be”, Faubion and Marcus, eds., pp. 1-34.

Homework: Submit your report on The Coffee Break Project to professor by March 23 at 10 am. This report as well as all your contributions to the Coffee Break Project...
will be graded as part of Assignment 6. The report should be brief (maximum 800 words) and should be carefully organized and edited. It should incorporate your thoughts on emerging themes, noticeable patterns, gaps, or puzzling contradictions found in The Coffee Break Project data. Your points should be substantiated via specific examples (citations from interviews, case count, tables, diagrams, graphs, photographs, etc.)

WEEK 12 (MARCH 25) PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Discuss some of your final conclusions on The Coffee Break Project.
- Discuss any insights derived from your experience with NVivo and Survey Monkey.

Homework: Prepare an 8-10 minute presentation (Assignment 7) outlining your plans for your upcoming research. You should clearly identify your overall question and how it engages with public or academic debates (remember you want to convince your audience that your research matters!). You also want to be sure that you clearly describe where and with whom you will be carrying out your research, and how you will be collecting your data. If you foresee any ethical problems pertinent to your research, describe how you plan to address them. Clarity, conciseness and the ability to answer class questions will all be taken into account when grading this assignment.

WEEK 13 (APRIL 1) CONCLUSION

- Elevator Pitch (Assignment 7) presentations.