

DOING ETHNOGRAPHY: MUSIC & SOUND – ANTH 220

Tues/Thurs 3:10-4:30

Blum N217

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What are the ethical stakes, practical questions, and methodological tools that we use when we “do ethnography”? This course is a survey of and practicum in ethnographic field methods with a particular focus on ethnographic studies of sound and music. We will survey and critique traditional methods of ethnographic engagement such as participant-observation, interviews, archival research, visual, sonic and textual analysis, and address the challenges of doing fieldwork in a variety of contexts, including the virtual domain. Intensive writing exercises will raise important questions about how qualitative research can be ethically and effectively “translated” into written text. Students will develop an ethnographic research project of their own design throughout the course of the semester that may be connected to an ethnographically grounded senior project. The practical aspects of conducting ethnographic fieldwork such as getting International Research Board (IRB) approval will be covered. This course satisfies the “field methods” requirement needed for moderation into anthropology and ethnomusicology.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Boellstorff, Tom, Bonnie Nardi, Celia Pearce, and T.L. Taylor. *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method* (2012). Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Lina L. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Feld, Steven. 2012. *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, 3rd ed. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Helbig, Adriana. 2014. *Hip-Hop Ukraine: Music, Race, and African Migration*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

MATERIALS

1. Dedicated field notebook
2. Smartphone or other device that can record sound and video and take photographs
3. Notebook for class notes
4. Account for collaborative course blog

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Participation (in class and online)	20%
Weekly Fieldwork Exercises	15%
Midterm & IRB protocol	15%
Fieldnotes	15%
Final Presentation	15%
Final Paper	20%

As this class is a methods course where you will develop your own ethnographic research project, **you should be prepared to provide a brief progress report at every class meeting in addition to the**

specific assignments as specified in this syllabus.

A note about weekly assignments: doing ethnography is the developing of a skill set that takes time and patience to develop. I do not believe that there is one single methodological approach when doing ethnographic research; rather, each ethnographer develops her own approach to every subject, and it is the task of each ethnographer to reflect upon appropriate approaches to her research project. There will be weeks where you are asked to do things that you are not sure how to do, but it is through the act of *doing* that you will learn. While there are many weeks where your weekly assignment will correspond to the methodology of the week, I am also asking you to use and re-use skills throughout the term, so that you can actually improve at doing ethnography.

COURSE BLOG

I have set up [a blog](https://courseblogs.bard.edu/anth220s15/) [https://courseblogs.bard.edu/anth220s15/] restricted to students enrolled in this class, where you will post weekly fieldwork exercises (beginning with our first class meeting). Please post your online assignment by the date and time listed. There will be many weeks in which your peers will comment on your work; posts that miss the deadline may not benefit from such online dialogues.

LECTURES, CONCERTS AND WORKSHOPS

During the course of the semester, there will be numerous workshops, concerts and lectures that relate to the substance of our class. You should plan to attend AT LEAST two events outside of class. You should write a brief summary/response of the events that you attend, and submit them to me, printed, shortly after attending the event. I will announce events in class and post them online for your convenience as well. If you attend more than two events during the semester, you can receive extra credit by submitting additional response papers.

PARTICIPATION

This class will benefit greatly from your thoughtful, sustained and enthusiastic participation. To be optimally prepared, readings and other assignments should be given sufficient time. "Participation" comprises 30% of your final grade and includes not only contributing your voice and perspective in class discussion, but also listening and responding to your peers to enhance class discussions. It also includes your online posts and comments. Please come to class prepared to pose at least one discussion question based on the day's readings. The following is a rubric that outlines how participation will be graded:

A: You contribute to nearly every class meeting, raising interesting questions or problems that demonstrate your deep engagement with the readings and assignments. You are able to respond to the comments of others and contribute to the flow of discussion. Without your participation, our discussion would be substantially less productive.

B: You contribute sometimes, with comments that demonstrate good preparation. You are able to respond to the comments of others and contribute to the flow of discussion. Without your participation, our discussion would be less productive.

C: You contribute rarely, offering comments that demonstrate some preparation. You rarely respond to the comments of others and only occasionally contribute to the flow of discussion. Without your participation, our discussion would be about the same.

D: You contribute very rarely or not at all, making it difficult to evaluate your preparedness. Without your participation, our discussion would be unchanged.

Also D: You contribute to discussions but your comments demonstrate unsatisfactory preparation and do not enhance the flow of conversation. Without your participation, our discussion would be improved.

ATTENDANCE

You are expected to attend every class meeting. After two absences, I reserve the right to lower your grade. Come to class five minutes early; late arrivals will be counted as absences. In-class assignments cannot be made up. If you miss class, you are responsible for whatever we covered during our meeting.

IN-CLASS TECHNOLOGY PROTOCOLS

Please bring your fieldnotebook, your class notebook and a writing implement to every class. Cherish class meetings as a protected space: eighty minutes free from social media and online shoe shopping. If you text, tweet, update your status, or do anything besides give your attention to the class in my classroom, you will be excused and counted as absent for that day.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I take plagiarism very seriously. When in doubt, cite. If you paraphrase, always cite. We will cover some of the basics of how to cite in class. If specific questions about attribution of ideas or intellectual property arise, please bring your questions to me or raise them in class.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

N.B. The following week-by-week plan is subject to change. Please consult the moodle for final decisions on readings, assignments and deadlines.

WEEK 1: ORIENTATION

Jan 27—What is Ethnography? *Orientations and class expectations; ethnomusicology and ethnography; getting-to-know-you interviews*

Assignment (due online, 1/28 by 9 PM): Post a one or two-sentence idea for your ethnographic research topic. Your topic may be presented as a research question or statement.

Jan 29—Ways of Knowing

Read: Boellstorff et al. (pp 1-51); Hahn, "First Orientation" (pp. 19-21)

Assignments (in class): Bring a printed copy of your interview transcript to class and your project idea, ready to share.

WEEK 2: DESIGNING A RESEARCH PROJECT

Feb 3—Designing Your Project (n.b. class will meet in Stevenson Library, 2nd floor computer lab)

Read: Becker, *Tricks of the Trade*, "Tricks" and "Imagery" (pp. 1-66)

Feb 5—Investigating Ethnographic Studies

Read: Boellstorff et al. (pp 52-64) and skim your assigned ethnography

Assignment (due in class): Group presentations on assigned ethnography (from list below). Your five-minute presentation should include a handout for the class and cover: Topic/Research Question, Description of the "Field," Theoretical Framework, Methods Used.

- Born, Georgina. 1995. *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Drew, Rob. 2001. *Karaoke Nights: An Ethnographic Rhapsody*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

- Keil, Charles. 1979. *Tiv Song*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lortat-Jacob, Bernard. 1995. *Sardinian Chronicles*. Translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- McAllester, David. 1954. *Enemy Way Music: A Study of Social and Esthetic Values as Seen in Navaho Music*, Cambridge, MA: The Museum.
- McDonald, David A. 2013. *My Voice is My Weapon: Music, Nationalism, and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Meintjes, Louise. 2003. *Sound of Africa: Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Merriam, Alan P. 1967. *The Ethnomusicology of the Flathead Indians*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Seeger, Anthony. 1987. *Why Suyu Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

WEEK 3: ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

Feb 10 Participant Observation

Read: Boellstorff et al. (pp 65-91); Bohannan and van der Elst, "The Beginnings of Ethnographic Fieldwork," "Participant Observation," "The Aliens Next Door" and "Who Speaks for Whom?" (pp 21-26, 55-57, 62-65)

Assignment (online, by Monday at 9 PM): Post an abstract-length proposal for your ethnographic project. Your proposal should include: description of field site, potential contacts, research question. Comment on at least two other student proposals.

Feb 12 Learning How to Ask: Interviews and Oral Histories

Read: Boellstorff et al. (pp 92-128)

Assignment (in class): Description of recruitment process (200 words) and 3-5 sample interview questions

WEEK 4: THICK DESCRIPTION

Feb 17 Representing Embodied Knowledge

Read: Hahn, *Sensational Knowledge* (pp. 70-144)

***In-class: Dr. Tomie Hahn**, Rensselaer Polytechnic institute and author of *Sensational Knowledge*

Feb 19 Thick Description

Read: Geertz, "Thick Description" (1-39); Titon, "Textual Analysis or Thick Description?" (171-180)

Assignment (online, by Wednesday at 9 PM): Thick description of participant observation (500-1000 words)

WEEK 5: MUSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY: HIP-HOP UKRAINE

****Monday, Feb. 23: lecture with Adriana Helbig**

Feb 24 Conversations with an Ethnographer

Read: Helbig, Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-63) *Helbig*, Chapters 2 & 3 and Epilogue (pp. 64-134; 190-194)

***In-class visit:** Prof. Adriana Helbig, University of Pittsburgh and author of *Hip-Hop Ukraine*

Feb 26

Read: Helbig, Chapters 2 & 3 and Epilogue (pp. 64-134; 190-194)

Assignment (online, by Wed 9 PM): Interview transcription (500-100 words)

WEEK 6: ETHICS & FIELDNOTES

Mar 3 Ethics

Read: Boellstorff et al. Pp. 129-158; read Bard's Institutional Review Board website (<http://inside.bard.edu/irb/>)

Assignment (in class): Take the **Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams** tutorial [<https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>] (approx. 2 hours) and bring a copy of your certification to class.

***In-class visit:** Dr. Pavlina Tcherneva, chair of the IRB committee at Bard and Professor of Economics

Mar 5 Fieldnotes

Read: Emerson et al, Chapter 1 and 2 (pp. 1-44); Taussig, "I Swear I Saw This" excerpt; (recommended) Barz, "Confronting the Field(note)" (pp. 206-223)

****Special Event:** Benjamin Harbert (Georgetown University) will present his ethnographic film, "Take Me Down: Portraits of Louisiana Prison Musicians" at the Weis Cinema, 8 PM. Attendance is mandatory.

Assignment (in class): Bring a draft of your IRB proposal to class.

WEEK 7: ETHNOGRAPHIC FILM

Mar 10 Ethnographic Films

Read/Watch: Zemp (1990), Ethical Issues in Ethnomusicological Film-making, Visual Anthropology; Zemp (1988/mood2014). Two Ethnographic Films on Muslim Music, TV Multiversity, <http://tvmultiversity.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/two-ethnographic-films-on-muslim-music.html>

Mar 12 Midterm exam + revised IRB protocol due in-class

WEEK 8: SPRING RECESS!

WEEK 9: ANTHROPOLOGY OF SOUND

Mar 23 Sound & Sentiment

Read: Feld, *Sound & Sentiment*, Introduction to the First Edition; Chapter 1 (pp. 3-43); Boellstorff et al. "Data Analysis" (pp. 159-181)

Mar 25 Dialogic Editing & Repatriation

Read: Feld, Introduction to the Third Edition; Preface to the Second Edition; Postscript, 1989 (pp. xiii-xli; 239-268); Jaarsma, "Thinking through Repatriation" (pp.1-13)

Assignment (online by Wed 9 PM): Post a one-minute clip of audio recorded from your field site with accompanying thick description (250-500 words)

WEEK 10: REPRESENTATION

Mar 31 Feminist Interventions

Read: Clifford "Partial Truths" (pp. 1-26); Abu-Lughod, "Writing Against Culture" (pp. 137-162); (recommended) Babiracki, "What's the Difference?" (pp.121-136)

Apr 2 Indigenous Epistemologies

Read: Diamond (2008), "Indigenous Knowledge and the Western Music School" (pp. 1-32)

Assignment (online, Wed by 9 PM): Analyzing your fieldnotes, reflect on questions of power and representation, citing specific instances from your research (500 words)

WEEK 11: SOUND RECORDINGS

Apr 7 Bright Balkan Morning

Read: Blau (2002), "Afterword" and pictures, plus Steven Feld's recordings in *Bright Balkan Morning*; Feld (2013), "On Field Recording" (pp. 1-8)

Assignment (online, Mon by 9 PM): Post a one-minute video with accompanying thick description (250-500 words) that focuses either on a: performance, object, built environment, gesture, or soundscape.

Apr 9 Sound & Digital Ethnography

Read: Hsu, "On Digital Ethnography: magnifying the materiality of culture" [<http://ethnographymatters.net/blog/2013/01/25/on-digital-ethnography-magnifying-the-materiality-of-culture-part-3-of-4/>]; visit *Sensate* journal

Assignment (online, by Wed 9 PM): Write a 250-500 response to one "article" from the *Sensate* journal

WEEK 12: NETWORKS & THE ETHNOGRAPHIC VOICE

Apr 14 Social and Other Networks

Read: Weston, *The Families We Choose* Ch. 1 (pp. 1-20); Hsu, "On Digital Ethnography: mapping as a mode of data discovery"; [<http://ethnographymatters.net/blog/2012/12/05/on-digital-ethnography-mapping-as-a-mode-of-data-discovery-part-2-of-4/>]

Apr 16 Producing Ethnographic Texts

Read: Emerson et al., Chapters 3 & 4 (pp. 45-126)

Assignment (online, by Wed 9 PM): Reflect on the social networks present in your fieldwork (500 words).

WEEK 13: WRITING ETHNOGRAPHY

Apr 21 ethnoGRAPHY

Read: Boellstorff et al., "Writing Up..." (pp.182-200); Wolf, "Writing Ethnography" (127-139)

Apr 23 Writing Workshop

Read: Emerson et al., 5,6, 7 (pp. 129-241)

Assignment (online, by Wed 9 PM): Post 1000-1500 words of your ethnography-in-progress, comment on the work of two of your peers.

*In-class writing workshop

WEEKS 14, 15, 16: FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Apr 28 ADVISING DAY

Apr 30 In-class presentations

Assignment (online, by 9 PM Thursday): Post a 250-500 word response to the works-in-progress presented in class. What did you learn? What questions did they raise? What were the strengths or weaknesses of specific presentations? Please write and reflect in a respectful and generous manner.

May 5 **In-class presentations**

May 7 **In-class presentations**

Assignment (online, by 9 PM Thursday): Post a 500-750 word response to the works-in-progress presented in class. What did you learn? What questions did they raise? What were the strengths or weaknesses of specific presentations? Please write and reflect in a respectful and generous manner.

May 12 **In-class presentations**

Assignment (online, by 9 PM Tuesday): Post a 250-500 word response to the works-in-progress presented in class. What did you learn? What questions did they raise? What were the strengths or weaknesses of specific presentations? Please write and reflect in a respectful and generous manner.

Fri, May 15 **Ethnographic Research Papers due by NOON**

REFERENCES

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. "Writing Against Culture." *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. ed. Richard G. Fox. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, pp. 137-162
- Babiracki, Carol M. 1997. "Confronting the Fieldnote." *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. eds. Barz, Gregory & Timothy J. Cooley. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 121-136.
- Barz, Gregory. 1997. "Confronting the Fieldnote." *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. eds. Barz, Gregory & Timothy J. Cooley. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 206-223.
- Becker, Howard S. 1998. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Blau, Dick. 2002. "Afterword." *Bright Balkan Morning: Romani Lives and the Power of Music in Greek Macedonia*, ed. Charles Keil and Angeliki Vellou Keil, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown CT, pp. 279-282.
- Boellstorff, Tom, Bonnie Nardi, Celia Pearce, and T.L. Taylor. *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method* (2012). Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Bohannon, Paul, and Dirk Van der Elst. 1998. *Asking and Listening: Ethnography as Personal Adaptation*. Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press.
- Clifford, James. 1986. "Introduction: Partial Truths." In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, edited by James and George E. Marcus Clifford, 1-26. Berkeley University of California Press.
- Diamond, Beverly. 2008. "Traditions of Knowledge: Indigenous Knowledge and the Western Music School." *Native American Music in Eastern North America*. Oxford University Press, pp. 1-32.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Lina L. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Feld, Steven. 2002. *Bells and Winter Festivals of Greek Macedonia*, Smithsonian Folkways: Washington DC. Sound recording.
- Feld, Steven. 2012. *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, 3rd ed. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description." *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

- Hahn, Tomie. 2007. *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture Through Japanese Dance*. Wesleyan University Press.
- Helbig, Adriana. 2014. *Hip-Hop Ukraine: Music, Race, and African Migration*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Jaarsma, Sjoerd R. 2002. "Thinking Through Repatriation." *Handle With Care: Ownership and Control of Ethnographic Materials*. Ed. Jaarsma, S.R. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 1-13.
- Taussig, Michael T. 2011. *I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely My Own*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Titon, Jeff. 2003. "Textual Analysis or Thick Description?" in *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, eds. Clayton, Martin, Trevor Herbert, and Richard Middleton. New York: Routledge, pp. 171-180.
- Weston, Kath. 1991. *Families we choose : lesbians, gays, kinship, Between men--between women*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 1-20.
- Wolf, Margery. 1992. "Writing Ethnography: The Poetics and Politics of Culture." *A Thrice-Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, pp. 127-139.
- Zemp, Hugo. 1990. "Ethical Issues in Ethnomusicological Film-Making." *Visual Anthropology*, Vol. 3, pp. 49-64.