

**FLR 684 (CRN 22340): SEMINAR FOLKLORE FIELDWORK  
WINTER 2015, Monday 2:00-4:50 pm, 453 PLC**

**Professor:** Lisa Gilman

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**Office hours:** Tuesdays 9 am -12 pm, and by appt

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**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- **Finnegan, Ruth.** 1992. *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts: A Guide to Research Practices*. New York: Routledge. [UO Bookstore and reserve Knight Library]
- **Gluck, Sherna Berger and Daphne Patai.** 1991. *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. New York: Routledge. [UO Bookstore and reserve Knight Library].
- **Bartis, Peter.** 2002 [1979]. *Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques*. Library of Congress Washington 2002. Available online <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/> or as PDF on Blackboard.
- **Additional Readings** accessible on Blackboard.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

- **Georges, Robert A. and Michael O. Jones.** 1980. *People Studying People: The Human Element in Fieldwork*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- **Jackson, Bruce.** 1987. *Fieldwork*. Urbana: University of Chicago Press

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course introduces students to ethnographic fieldwork in folklore by integrating research practice with methodological and theoretical readings. Topics include identifying a subject of study, developing appropriate research strategies, initiating fieldwork, establishing rapport, reflexivity, representation, and uses for technology. Each student will conceptualize and execute a fieldwork project while developing practical skills in proposal writing, observation, interviewing, analysis, documentation, and presentation.

**GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS** (more detailed guidelines for each assignment will be posted on Blackboard and usually distributed in class):

**Nine assignments (45% final grade, 5% each):** When possible, assignments should contribute to final project.

**Assignment #1: Observation of worship service at religious institution (church, temple, mosque, etc.), due 1/12:** Attend a worship service with which you are not already familiar. Write a 3-4 page detailed description of your observations.

**Assignment #2: Proposal: research plan for this term, due 1/19 (class makeup):** 3-4 pages explaining your research topic, research goals, strategies for accomplishing your goals, timeline, and format for final project.

**Assignment #3: CITI test, due 1/19 (makeup class):** Students must pass the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) test required for Human Subjects approval. Go to UO's website *Research Compliance Services* for instructions for accessing and taking test:  
<http://orcr.uoregon.edu/index.cfm?action=irb&sub=citi>

**Assignment #4: Observation: group exercise using different forms of documentation technologies, due 1/26:** small groups of students attend an event together, document it using different media, and each writes about her/his experience.

**Assignment #5: Interview, due 2/2:** Conduct one interviewee-driven audio-recorded interview (30-60 minutes long). Your 2-3 page paper should describe the interview process and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the interview.

**Assignment #6: Interview transcription, 2/9:** Word-for-word transcription of the interview.

**Assignment #7: Reflexive report of fieldwork thus far, due 2/16:** 3-4 page essay detailing what you have accomplished thus far and reflexively considering your research process, e.g. ethical concerns, positionality, and other methodological issues

**Assignment #8: Critical review of ethnography or ethnographic film, due 3/2:** Select a folklore study (monograph or film) based in ethnographic fieldwork methods (can be one read or viewed

previously). Write a 3-4-page paper in which you explain the author's or filmmaker's fieldwork methodologies. Consider how they went about doing the research and any ethical or other methodological issues.

**Assignment #9: Presentation (half of class will present on 3/9, the other half during finals week):**

An oral presentation of the final project accompanied by audio-visuals.

**Fieldwork journal/fieldnotes (15% final grade), due 3/16 by 5:00 pm:** Students are required to keep a journal of their research this term, documenting their progress, noting details, and reflecting on their strategies. You should write one or more entries per week. Entries should include both fieldnotes and reflections on all significant steps of the research process (making contact, observations, interviews, recordings, successes, failures, and so on). You may include class assignments in your journal as relevant. Format is up to you, though blogs will not be accepted.

**Final Project (40% final grade), due 3/16 by 5:00 pm.** Each student will work in conjunction with instructor to identify a fieldwork topic and to complete a fieldwork project during the course of the term. A student's interests and academic/professional goals will determine their choice of format for their final product. Options are:

1. Fieldwork report [10-page report detailing process and goals].
2. Conference-length research paper [10-page paper integrating fieldwork and analysis].
3. Draft of prospectus of M.A. thesis or terminal project. (may be appropriate for 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year Folklore master's students)
4. 20+ page paper written in conjunction with another course (both the instructor of the other class and I have to approve).
5. Students interested in other options should discuss ideas with me.

**Attendance**

- Attendance is mandatory and fundamental to your success in this course.
- If you have to miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain notes and materials. If absence is due to excusable circumstances, you may meet with me (office hours/scheduled appointment) to review missed materials.
- Excusable circumstances include: death in family, serious illness, ill dependents, observance of a religious holiday, and other university recognized conflicts. Be prepared to provide documentation.
- If excusable circumstances prevent your turning in an assignment on time, inform your professor **before** or **within 24 hours after** the due date via e-mail, telephone, or a dated note in the professor's mailbox (this requirement will be lifted in extreme circumstances). **Papers will drop one letter grade for each day they are late (if unexcused).**

**Special needs/accommodations:** I will do everything possible to assist those with special needs. Please meet with me in the first week of class to discuss how I can accommodate you.

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**SCHEDULE OF CLASS READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**  
**WEEK 1, JAN 5: GETTING STARTED**

**Topics:**

- What is fieldwork?
- Participant observation
- Fieldwork for academic vs. public sector
- Finding a topic
- Identifying a fieldwork community
- Developing rapport

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**WEEK 2, JAN 12: RESEARCH GOALS/RESEARCH STRATEGIES**

**DUE-- Assignment #1: Observation of church service**

**Topics:**

- Discussion of worship service observations
- Research strategies for different types of research
- Project design
- Human Subjects Research Compliance at the University of Oregon

**Required readings:**

- Bartis, Peter. 2002 [1979]. *Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques*. Library of Congress Washington 2002. Available: <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/> or as PDF on Blackboard. **(SKIM)**
- Finnegan. Ch. 3 & 5
- Dewalt, Kathleen M., Billie R. Dewalt with Coral B. Wayland. 1998. Participant Observation. In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard, pp. 259-99. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [Blackboard]
- University of Oregon policies and procedures for research involving human subjects (AKA people). Peruse the website: <http://orcr.uoregon.edu/index.cfm?action=irb>.

**Optional readings:**

- Benmayor. "Testimony, Action Research, and Empowerment: Puerto Rican Women and Popular Education." (Gluck and Patai, p. 159)
- Spitzer, Nicholas R. 1992. Cultural Conversion: Metaphors and Methods in Public Folklore. In *Public Folklore*, eds. Robert Baron and Nicholas Spitzer, pp. 77-103. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. [Blackboard]

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**WEEK 3, JAN 19: DOCUMENTING (MLK DAY-RESCHEDULE)**

**DUE:**

- **Assignment #2: Proposal: research plan for this term.**
- **Assignment #3: CITI test successfully completed (show me certificate of completion)**

**Topics:**

- Observing
- Documenting: fieldnotes, photography, video, audio

**Required readings:**

- Finnegan Ch. 4
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, pp. 1-38. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. [Blackboard]
- Collier, John Jr. and Malcolm Collier. *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*, pp. 161-73. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. [Blackboard]

**Optional readings:**

- Henley, Paul. 2004. Putting Film to Work: Observational Cinema as Practical Ethnography. In *Working Images: Visual Research and Representation in Ethnography*, eds. Sarah Pink, László Kürti, and Ana Isabel Afonso, pp. 109-30. NY: Routledge. [Blackboard]

#### WEEK 4, JAN 26: CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW

##### DUE-- Assignment #4: Observation: group exercise, experiment with different forms of documentation

###### Topics

- Discussion Assignment #4
- Types of interviews
- Practical interview exercise

###### Required readings:

- Briggs, Charles L. 1986. Listen Before You Leap: Toward Methodological Sophistication. In *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*, pp. 93-111. Cambridge University Press. [Blackboard]
  - Anderson and Jack. "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses." (Gluck and Patai, p. 11)
  - Minister, "A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview." (Gluck and Patai, p. 27)
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#### WEEK 5, FEB 2: TRANSCRIPTION/ADDITIONAL SOURCES AND STRATEGIES/ ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE DIGITAL WORLD

##### DUE-- Assignment #5: Interview assignment

###### Topics:

- Discussion of Interview assignment
- Other research sources:
  - Internet
  - Library
  - Archives
- Processing interviews:
  - Annotation
  - Transcription

###### Required readings:

- Finnegan. Chapter 9 (on transcription)
  - Garcia, Angela Cora, Alecea I. Standlee, Jennifer Bechkoff and Yan Cui. 2009. Ethnographic Approaches to the Internet and Computer-Mediated Communication. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 38 (1): 52-84.
  - Peruse the website and read 2-3 articles, columns, or entries of your choice from the web publication *Ethnography Matters*: <http://ethnographymatters.net/>
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#### WEEK 6, FEB 9: THE SELF IN RESEARCH/ETHICS

##### DUE-- Assignment #6: Interview transcription

###### Topics:

- Progress Report
- The self in research

###### Required readings:

- Finnegan, Chapter 10
  - Etter-Lewis. "Black Women's Life Stories: Reclaiming Self in Narrative Texts." (Gluck and Patai, p. 43)
  - Olson and Shopes, "Crossing Boundaries, Building Bridges: Doing Oral History among Working-Class Women and Men." (Gluck and Patai, p. 189)
  - Patai. "U.S. Academics and Third World Women: Is Ethical Research Possible?" (Gluck and Patai, p. 137)
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## WEEK 7, FEB 16: MANAGING DATA/ANALYSIS

### DUE-- Assignment #7: Reflexive report of fieldwork thus far

#### Topics:

- Classification
- Identifying patterns
- Analysis

#### Required readings:

- Finnegan, Chapter 8
- Bernard, H. Russell and Gery W. Ryan. 1998. Text Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods. In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard, pp. 595-646. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. [Blackboard]
- Lawless, Elaine J. 1992. "I Was Afraid Someone like You... an Outsider... Would Misunderstand": Negotiating Interpretive Differences between Ethnographers and Subjects. *The Journal of American Folklore* 105 (417): 302-314.
- Borland, "'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research" (Gluck/Patai, p. 63)

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## WEEK 8, FEB 23: CRITICALLY CONSUMING ETHNOGRAPHIC PRODUCTS

#### Topics:

- Reading and writing Ethnography

#### Required readings:

- James Clifford. 1986. "Introduction: Partial Truths." In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, p. 1-26. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Blackboard]
- George Marcus. 1986. Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the Modern World System. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, p. 165-93. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Blackboard]

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## WEEK 9, MAR 2: FROM TEXT TO TEXT

### DUE-- Assignment #8: Critical review of ethnography or ethnographic film

#### Topics:

- Producing texts

#### Required readings:

- Salazar, Claudia "A Third World Woman's Text: Between the Politics of Criticism and Cultural Politics." (Gluck and Patai, p. 93)
- Underberg, Natalie M. 2006. Virtual and Reciprocal Ethnography on the Internet: The East Mims Oral History Project Website. *Journal of American Folklore* 119 (473): 301-11. [Blackboard]
- Ancelet, Barry Jean. 2003. The Theory and Practice of Activist Folklore: From Fieldwork to Programming. In *Working the Field: Accounts from French Louisiana*, eds. Henry and LeMenestrel, pp. 81-100. Connecticut: Praeger Publishers. [Blackboard]
- Lassiter, Luke Erik. 2005. Chapter 8: Collaborative Reading, Writing, and Co-interpretation. In *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography*, pp. 133-54. The University of Chicago Press. [Blackboard]

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## WEEK 10, MAR 9: FINAL PRESENTATIONS

### DUE-- Assignment #9: Half of students present on final projects

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## FINALS WEEK: DAY/TIME TBA

### DUE-- Assignment #9: Half of students present on final projects

\*\*\*\*FINAL PROJECTS AND FIELDWORK JOURNALS\*\*\*\*\*

DUE 5:00 PM ON MONDAY, MARCH 16 IN MY OFFICE