

Ethnographies of Childhood

50:163:372

Spring 2023

Tuesday and Thursday: 2:00 pm – 3:20 pm

Armitage 201

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Office Hours: Thursday 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In contemporary social science research, ‘ethnography’ refers to a research process and the written (or visual/film) account that results from this research. The ethnographic research method is an integral part of Anthropology and is a key research method for studying children and childhoods. Doing ethnographic research involves “placing oneself in the research context for extended periods to gain a first-hand sense of how local knowledge is put to work in grappling with practical problems of everyday life and with basic philosophical problems of knowledge, truth, power, and justice” (American Anthropology Association, 2013).

In this Course, we will be reading ethnographic research conducted with children and youth in various contexts and cultures. We will explore various genres of ethnographic research, including linguistic, digital, media, and autoethnography, to better understand the scope of this research method.

The readings in this Course are of two kinds: most readings assigned for Tuesday’s class focus on ethnography as a method. On the other hand, the readings for Thursday’s class are devoted to ethnographic research on children and cover various issues ranging from being an undocumented child in Malaysia to sharing school lunch in the U.S.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this Course are the following:

1. To develop students’ understanding of the richness of ethnographic research as both a narrative and method
2. To increase students’ abilities to compare and contrast the everyday lives of children across various contexts and cultures
3. To encourage students to understand children as agential subjects who engage with their everyday realities in expected and unexpected ways and to gain knowledge of how ethnographic research interprets and theorizes these engagements

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

You should demonstrate an ability to engage ethnographic research on children and childhoods through class discussions, written assignments, and research-related exercises. We hope you will come away from the course with a more complex understanding of what ethnographic research with children entails and how ethnographic research generates knowledge that allows for a more critical engagement with broader social issues of justice and power. We also expect the Course readings to help you engage more thoughtfully with critical aspects of children's lives like schooling, play, food, street, sexuality, etc.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

This Course combines the study of ethnography as research outcome and research method. At least one class per week will focus on reading ethnographic research that sheds more light on diverse childhoods and children's everyday experiences. The topics that we will read more about in this Course include children's experiences negotiating multiple identities, statelessness, disability, school, work, mediatized and non-mediatized play, food, friendships, literacy, and work. In addition, this Course also aims to teach you more about ethnography as a research process. On most Tuesdays, the readings and class activities will be devoted to learning more about ethnography as a research process, including preliminary observation and interviews.

Given this dual focus of our Course, assignments will evaluate your knowledge of ethnography as research outcome and research method.

All the assigned readings are available on Canvas and are arranged by the week, i.e., Week 1, Week 2, etc.

COURSE EVALUATION:

	ASSIGNMENTS	WEIGHT	DUE DATE
1.	Attendance and Participation	10%	Throughout the Course
2.	Ethnographic Observations*	25%	Throughout the course
3.	Two Take-home Tests (10% x 2)	20%	First test-distributed on 2/22. Due back on 2/25. Second test distributed on 4/28. Due back on 5/9
4.	Class Presentation	10%	You will be responsible for presenting one of the assigned readings in class.
5.	Film Response x 3	15%	First film Response Paper due on 3/11 Second film Response Paper due on 4/8 Third Film Response Paper due on 4/29
6.	Surprise Quizzes	10%	Some classes will begin with a multiple-choice quiz on the assigned reading.
7.	Framing questions for 'Meet an Ethnographer'	10%	Throughout the course

1. Attendance and Participation (10 points)

We expect you to attend class having read the assigned readings. We expect you to participate in classes, including small group-based work assigned during class time. We will assess your participation throughout the term. You are permitted two (2) absences during the entire term; additional unexplained absences may affect your grade. Please notify us of your reason for not attending (via email) prior to class unless, of course, there is some unforeseen emergency. In the latter case, please provide a note thereafter.

2. Ethnographic Observations (25 points)

Since this is a course on ethnography, students will be undertaking some preliminary fieldwork using ethnographic methods. We expect students to complete all components of this fieldwork exercise to receive a grade for this assignment. Components of this research include the following:

- a. Conduct two 'observations' and write each of these up in narrative form. Each 'observation' should not be less than 600 words in length. We discuss this further in class. (First research observation narrative – 7 points; second research observation narrative – 7 points)
Your first Observation is due on 3/28. You will share your first Observation with the class on the same day. Your second Observation exercise is due on 4/27. You will be sharing your first observation in class on 3/28 and your second observation on 4/25.
- b. We expect each student to conduct an interview. This interview should consist of at least 3 distinct questions. You must try and obtain substantial responses to each of these questions. We will discuss this assignment further in class. (Draft interview questions 2 points) and interview transcript – 4 points)
Draft questions for the interview are due on 4/13. Your submitted interview transcripts will be part of your final portfolio.
- c. Using one or more assigned readings, you will provide a brief analysis of your 'observations' and interview. This analysis will consist of answering a few questions based on your research. (Final analysis – 5 points). This analysis will be part of your final portfolio.
You will submit a complete portfolio of all your work around this 'ethnographic observation' assignment. Your final portfolio should include your two observations, interview transcript, and final analysis. Complete portfolios are due on 4/27.

3. Take-home Tests x 2 (Total points for class test- 10 points x 2=20 points)

These will be based on readings. There will be 2 take-home tests. Each test will have 2 short-answer questions. The first test will be shared in class on 2/21 and will be due on 2/26. The second test will be shared on 4/27 and will be due on 5/8.

4. Class Presentation on Assigned Reading (10 points)

You will select one of the assigned readings to present in class. You will develop a PowerPoint presentation on this reading. This presentation will consist of several slides as detailed below. Your PowerPoint presentation should be no less than 5 minutes (and no more than 8 minutes) and should include the following:

1. Slide 1: Share the following information from the assigned reading - the author's research context and research question. Do not quote directly from the reading but instead present this information in 1-3 sentences.
2. Slide 2: Highlight one example of media content related to the assigned reading. An example could be from newspaper clippings, news stories on T.V., songs, videos, advertisements, etc.
3. Slide 3: Draw links between this media content and two key points/ideas from the reading.

4. Slide 4: Highlight relevant passages from the readings (with page numbers).
5. Slide 5: Based on the assigned reading, develop two questions for class discussion. One of these questions must be based on points raised/concepts included in the reading. The second question should open up the reading and connect it to your daily life.

Your presentation will be evaluated on preparation, the extent to which the presentation included all the elements stated above, your ability to convey key ideas from the reading, selecting appropriate media/everyday life examples, and crafting appropriate questions.

NOTE: Please do not summarize the reading in your presentation.

5. Film Response x 3 (3x5=15 points)

We will be viewing 3 ethnographic films in class. You will be required to write up a 300-word response to each film. Prompts will be provided to help you frame your responses.

- The first film response is due 3/10
- The second film response is due 4/7
- The third film response is due 4/28

6. Surprise Quizzes (10 points)

There will be 10 surprise quizzes on the assigned readings during the term. Each quiz will contain 4 multiple-choice questions of .25 marks each, adding up to a total of 1 point per quiz, i.e., 10 total points for 10 surprise quizzes. In addition, most classes will include group work around the assigned readings, and these will be graded (5 points for the semester). You will not be allowed to make up a surprise quiz nor class exercise that you have missed unless you have shared in advance, with Dr. Balagopalan, your reasons for missing a particular class.

7. Framing questions for 'Meet An Ethnographer' (10 points)

Throughout the semester we will have several ethnographers visiting class on Tuesdays during the final 30 minutes of class. Before they join us each Tuesday you will be given 10 minutes in class to write out a question based on that day's assigned reading on ethnographic method. After the visiting ethnographer shares their research you will then ask the visiting ethnographer your question. Framing a question and asking this to the visiting ethnographer are the two components of this assignment. The point of this assignment is to converse with the visiting ethnographers on what it is like to do fieldwork and to do this through tying your question to the assigned reading on ethnographic methods.

You will be given a notecard in class to write out your question. Please make sure that you submit this notecard to Eunhye at the end of Tuesday's class. Please write out your name on the notecard. If absent on a particular Tuesday then please submit your question via email (to Eunhye) **before class** to receive credit for this assignment.

GRADE CONVERSION

A	100 – 90		
B+	89.9 – 84.5	B	84.49 – 79.5
C+	79.49 – 74.5	C	74.49 – 69.5

COMMUNICATION

I will do my very best to respond to emails within 24 hours. During the weekends, I do not usually check my Rutgers email. I will use Canvas to communicate information related to our class regularly, so please ensure to check your email account and the Canvas site continuously.

CANVAS

All course readings and other related materials will be available on Canvas. To get started, go to canvas.rutgers.edu and log in with your Rutgers net I.D. and password.

The Canvas site for this Course is designed around weekly modules. Each weekly module consists of the assigned readings for the week and related assignments. All assignments, except 'Framing Questions for Meet An Ethnographer', should be submitted on the course site. Also, check your emails about updates from this course site. If you experience any trouble, please contact the Help Desk: canvas@rutgers.edu.

Lectures and materials utilized in this course, including but not limited to videocasts, podcasts, visual presentations, assessments, and assignments, are protected by United States copyright laws as well as Rutgers University policy. As the instructor of this course, I possess sole copyright ownership. You are permitted to take notes for personal use or to provide to a classmate also currently enrolled in this course. Under no other circumstances is the distribution of recorded or written materials associated with this course permitted to any internet site or similar information-sharing platform without my express written consent. Doing so is a violation of the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#). Similarly, these copyright protections extend to original papers you produce for this course. In the event that I seek to share your work further, I will first obtain your written consent to do so.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Rutgers University takes academic dishonesty very seriously. By enrolling in this course, you assume responsibility for familiarizing yourself with the Academic Integrity Policy and the possible penalties (including suspension and expulsion) for violating the policy. As per the policy, all suspected violations will be reported to the Office of Community Standards.

Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to):

- cheating
- plagiarism
- aiding others in committing a violation or allowing others to use your work
- failure to cite sources correctly
- fabrication
- using another person's ideas or words without attribution
- re-using a previous assignment
- unauthorized collaboration
- sabotaging another student's work

If in doubt, please consult the instructor. Please review the Academic Integrity Policy at:

<https://nbacademicintegrity.rutgers.edu>

Level 1 Violations	Level 2 Violations	Level 3 Violations
Less Serious	More Serious	Most Serious
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inexperience or lack of understanding of the principles of academic integrity • no or low degree of premeditation or planning • occur on a minor assignment or quiz • constitute a small portion of a major assignment • represent a small percentage of the total course work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • second offense • substantial premeditation or planning; clear dishonest or malicious intent • occur on a major assignment or quiz • constitute a significant portion of a major assignment • represent a large percentage of the total coursework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • serious violation of a professional code of conduct • extreme cases of dishonesty and maliciousness • may involve violation of the law • likely to cause direct harm to others
Level 1 Examples	Level 2 Examples	Level 3 Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plagiarism on a minor assignment or a very limited portion of a major assignment • Unpremeditated cheating on a quiz or minor examination • Prohibited collaboration with another student on a homework assignment • Unauthorized sharing of course materials • Citing a source that does not exist or that one has not read on a minor assignment • Signing in for another student via attendance sheet or clicker in a course where attendance is graded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A second violation • Substantial plagiarism on a major assignment • Copying or using unauthorized materials, devices, or collaboration on a major exam • Distribution of course materials for financial gain • Intentionally obstructing another student's work • Participating in an organized cheating scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any violation involving potentially criminal activity • Coordinating an organized cheating scheme • Having a substitute take an examination • Cheating and/or plagiarism on a capstone project, thesis, or dissertation • Intentionally destroying another student's work • Falsifying patient or client records

ADA STATEMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS).

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES (ODS)

The Office of Disability Services provides students with confidential advising and accommodation services to allow students with documented physical, mental, and learning disabilities to successfully complete their course of study at Rutgers University – Camden. The ODS provides confidential documentation and verification of student accommodations and communicates with faculty regarding disabilities and accommodations. The ODS provides accommodation services, which can include readers, interpreters, alternate text, special equipment, and note-takers. The ODS acts as a signatory for special waivers. The ODS also works with students, faculty, staff, and administrators to enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Director of Disability Services, Rutgers-Camden (all schools including law)

Erin G. Leuthold, MS Ed

P: (856) 225-6442

F: (856) 225-6443 Rutgers-Camden Learning

Center Armitage Hall, Room 231

CHILDCARE/FAMILIAL CARE

Many students have care responsibilities for a child or an older family member in their life. If your responsibilities as a caregiver ever come into conflict with the course schedule, please do not feel as though you need to miss class,

especially with our current circumstances. If this happens, do not hesitate to contact me so we can rearrange your schedule.

COVID-19 STATEMENT

As a global community, we are facing unprecedented times that affect us all but in different and changing ways. It is a time that calls for unity, solidarity, and empathy. In case of sickness, changing circumstances, or family emergencies, please take care of yourself and your loved ones first. In due time, please let me know of your circumstances so we can work together for a solution.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS-

We will make every attempt to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Please complete the assigned readings before class.

WEEK 1

January 17th

Discussion of Course; Sharing of Syllabus and Expectations; Navigating Canvas.

January 19th

What is Ethnographic Research? Introduction to Ethnography

WEEK 2 (Online Synchronous)

January 24th

Galman, Sally (2019) Naptime at the O.K. Corral: Shane's Beginner's Guide to Childhood Ethnography. Chapter 1. New York: Routledge

Meet an Ethnographer: Sarada Balagopalan

January 26th

Estrada, Emir et al. (2011) 'Intersectional Dignities: Latino Immigrant Street Vendor Youth in Los Angeles' in Journal of Contemporary Ethnography; vol. 40(1); pp. 102-131.

WEEK 3

January 31st

Galman, Sally (2019) *Naptime at the O.K. Corral: Shane's Beginner's Guide to Childhood Ethnography*. Chapter 4 & 5. New York: Routledge

Meet an Ethnographer: Rashmi Kumari

February 2nd

Allerton, Catherine (2014) "Statelessness and the lives of children of migrants in Sabah, East Malaysia" *Tilburg Law Review* (Gaunt) 19 (Issues 1 and 2), pp. 26 – 34.

WEEK 4

February 7th

Punch, Samantha (2002) 'Research with children: The same or different than research with Adults?' in *Childhood*. Vol 9 (3), pp. 321-341.

Meet an Ethnographer: Diana Garcia

February 9th

Allard, Elaine (2015) "Undocumented Status and Schooling for Newcomer Teens" *Harvard Educational Review*. vol.85 (3), pp.478-501.

Discuss Ethnographic Observation Exercise

WEEK 5

February 14th

Lico, S. and W. Luttrell (2011) "An Important Part of Me: A Dialogue About Difference" *Harvard Educational Review*. No. 18(4), pp. 667-686.

Meet an Ethnographer: Deszeree Thomas

February 16th

Paugh, Amy and C. Isquerido (2009) "Why Is This a Battle Every night? Negotiating Food and Eating in American Dinnertime Interaction" *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*. Vol.19 (2), pp.185-204.

WEEK 6

February 21st

'Researching Place: The Spatial Gaze' in J. Cook et al. (2012) *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research*. Bedford: St. Martin's Press. pp. 165-205.

Meet an Ethnographer: Smruthi Balakannan

Take-home Test: Shared on February 21st and DUE by 11.59 pm on Sunday, February 26th.

February 23rd

1st Film – First Person Plural

First Film Response- Due on March 9th

WEEK 7

February 28th

Annamma, Subini (2018) 'Mapping Consequential Geographies in the Carceral State' in *Qualitative Inquiry*. vol 24(1), p.20-34.

Meet an Ethnographer: Anna Perry

DUE: Submit site plus question for Ethnographic Observation

March 2nd

Nakuga, Misako (2008) "The Underlife of Kids' School Lunchtime: Negotiating Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Food Exchange" in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. Vol. 37(3); pp.342-380.

Due: 1st Film Response

WEEK 8

March 7th

Abebe, T (2009) "Multiple methods, complex dilemmas: negotiating socio-ethical spaces in participatory research with disadvantaged children" *Children's Geographies*. vol.7(4), pp. 451-465.

Meet an Ethnographer: Janice Stiglich

March 9th

Jenks, Elaine (2005) 'Explaining Disability: Parents Stories of Raising Children with Visual Impairments in a Sighted World' in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. vol.34 (2); pp. 143-169.

NO CLASS ON MARCH 14th and MARCH 16th - SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9

March 21st

Class Activity: Galman, Sally (2019) *Naptime at the O.K. Corral: Shane's Beginner's Guide to Childhood Ethnography*. Chapter 8. New York: Routledge.

Meet an Ethnographer: Sebastian Barajas

March 23rd

2nd Film – The Mask You Live In

Second Film Response due April 6th

WEEK 10

March 28th

Share first ethnographic observation in class

DUE: Your first ethnographic observation is due today. You will bring a print out of this to class.

March 30th

Perry, Kristen and A, Marsh (2011) “Television, Language and Literacy Practices in Sudanese Refugee Families” in *Research in the Teaching of English* Vol 45 (3). pp. 278-307.

WEEK 11

April 4th

Morelli, C (2021) “The Right to Change: Co-Producing Ethnographic Animation with Indigenous Youth in Amazonia.” in *Visual Anthropology Review*. vol. 37(2). pp. 334-355.

April 6th

Third Film – TBD

DUE: Second Film Response Paper

WEEK 12

April 11th

Wun, C. (2016). Against captivity: Black girls and school discipline policies in the afterlife of slavery. *Educational Policy*, 30(1), 171-196

Meet an Ethnographer: TBD

April 13th

Bornstein, Erica. (2001) Child sponsorship, evangelism, and belonging in the work of World Vision Zimbabwe, *American Ethnologist*, 28, 3: 595-622.

DUE: Draft Questions for Interview exercise linked to Ethnographic observation assignment

WEEK 13

April 18th

No class today: Work on second observation and interview.

April 20th

Valles, D (2021) "Chill pills panic: Legal Constructions of Play, Race and the Policing of Care in California's administrative courts" in *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* (POLAR), 44 (1), pp. 156-171.

DUE: Third Film Response Paper

WEEK 14

April 25th

Share Second Ethnographic Observation and Interview Excerpts

April 27th

DUE: Second Ethnographic Observation, Interview, and Analysis

Final Take Home Test distributed on April 27th. Due Back on May 8th by 11.59 pm.