

# Ethnography Project Guidelines

## Overview

This project is a “hands-on” application of what we are learning about in this course and will give you a chance to try out planning and conducting primary research. You will utilize some of the hallmark methods of cultural anthropology by participant-observing human behavior, writing notes about your observations, and analyzing what you observed in conversation with the course materials and one additional source. Before you undertake the field work and analysis, you will create a project proposal that considers feasibility, ethical considerations, and impact and/or relevance of the study. You will submit at least two sets of fieldnotes from your observations as part of the project. All aspects of the project will be submitted digitally on Canvas.

**Whom to research:** you should be studying a group of people (not just one or two people), and it should be a group with whom you can have an insider-outsider role. For a first ethnographic experience, it can be easier to conduct the research in a context where you are not totally a part of the group. Having said that, you do not want to be unwelcome.

**What to research:** think about how you can make this project personally useful by exploring something about which you are curious, exposing yourself to a new viewpoint, and/or investigating a question that might be relevant to your career.

The **component distribution** for this project is as follows:

Component	Due Date	Point Value
Ethnography Proposal	<del>Wed., Oct. 24</del> Wed., Oct. 31	60
Annotated Source(s)	<del>Wed., Nov. 7</del> Mon., Nov. 12	40
Fieldnotes #1	Mon., Nov. 19	40
Fieldnotes #2	Wed., Nov. 28	40
Ethnographic Essay	Fri., Dec. 7	120
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>

## Ethnography Proposal

**Due Wed., Oct. 31 (PUSHED BACK)**

250-400 words in paragraph or sentence outline form that:

- Identifies an area of cultural anthropology that interests you.
- Identifies one or two research questions that interest you.
- Identifies a group of people you could investigate through participant-observation.
- Explains your connection, if any, to the group.
- Considers practical and ethical issues or potential issues and how you will handle them.
- Proposes a timeline and specific plan for participant-observation and other project work.

## Annotated Source(s)

**Due Mon., Nov. 12 (PUSHED BACK)**

Chicago-style citation for one (or more) peer-reviewed journal article or scholarly book (chapter) that relates to your research question or the group you are studying and that you will reference in your essay.

AND 250-400 words in paragraph or sentence outline form that:

- Explains the context of the resources.
- Summarizes the main points of the resource.
- Explains how you anticipate the resource will be relevant to your research (for example: historical context about the group, something to compare your observations with, a useful concept or terminology).
- Optional---relates it to course concepts and content.

## Fieldwork

**(Fieldnotes and essay [below] are the evidence you complete and submit for this phase.)**

- Make arrangements to conduct your fieldwork.
- Visit your field site for at least one hour cumulatively and conduct participant-observation.
- Take notes during your participant-observation.
- Clean up fieldnotes and review.

## Fieldnotes

**Due Mon., Nov. 19, AND Wed., Nov. 28**

Typed or scanned (legible) handwritten notes about your participant-observation with the group.

Each set of notes should be 300 words minimum and include things like:

- Description of the setting: who, what, where, when, how.
- Notes about your own position, actions, reflections, and how others seemed to perceive you.
- Transcription or paraphrasing of conversations you have with group members.

## Ethnographic Essay

**Due Fri., Dec. 7**

1,250-1,500 words in a narrative essay that draws (preliminary) conclusions about the meaning or significance of data you collected through fieldwork that includes:

- Explanation of your research question and of methods and context for your research.
- A thesis or claim about your preliminary findings.
- Evidence from your observations (like what you documented in your fieldnotes).
- Relation to your annotated source and at least one course concept (with reference to the textbook).
- Proposal for further research.
- Chicago author-date style in-text citations and bibliography.