

ECD/SPF 791
Educational Ethnography
Fall 2006
Joseph Tobin

Office Hours:

Farmer 302b on Wednesdays, 3-4:30 or by appointment
Tel: 480 965 1451
e-mail: joseph.tobin@asu.edu

Overview of the course:

This is a research methods seminar on the use of ethnographic methods for education research. We will read about education in various settings and we will be discuss anthropological explanations of such educational problems as the educational underachievement of disadvantaged groups. But our focus will be on ethnographic *methods* rather than on ethnographic findings or theories.

Classroom activities will be a mix of (short) lectures, large and small group discussions, and hands-on exercises.

This doctoral-level course assumes that students are familiar with qualitative research methods.

Grading:

Grades will be based on credit/no credit for the four required short papers and a letter grade for the final paper. Grades will not include pluses or minuses. Plagiarism will lead to a failing grade in the course and a referral for disciplinary action.

Required readings:

One ethnography (of your choice)

One educational ethnography (of your choice)

Joseph Tobin, David Wu, and Dana Davidson, *Preschool in Three Cultures*

Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor*

Other required readings will be available in PDF format for download on the class Blackboard site

Assignments:

- 1) One or more weekly postings to the class Blackboard site's forums.
- 2) Two short (2-4 page) book reports

- 4) Observation/participation field note
- 5) Interview field note
- 6) A final paper (8-12 pages) on a topic of your choice, due on December 13. Topics may include:
 - a mini-ethnography
 - the method section of a dissertation proposal using ethnography
 - a discussion of an important issue in ethnography

Schedule

- 8/23 **Introduction to the course: What is Culture? What is Ethnography?**
 Defining "culture"
 Select an ethnography to read and write a review of
 Review Syllabus
 Ethnography exercise: "Anthropologists and Natives"
- 8/30 No Class
- 9/6 **What Makes an Ethnography an Ethnography?**
 Reading to discuss: Bronislaw Malinowski, "The subject, method, and scope of this inquiry,"
 Introduction to *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Pp. 3-25.
 Establishing the research alliance
 Why do people agree to be studied by anthropologists?
 Paper 1 due (review of your ethnography)
- 9/13 **Socialization/Acculturation/Initiation**
 What are the strengths and weaknesses of ethnography as a method?
 Mead videos
- 9/20 **Cultural Relativism as Ethic and Epistemology**
 Readings:
 Choose an educational ethnography to read and write a short review
- 9/27 **Educational Ethnography**
 Reading to discuss: Your educational ethnography
 Video observation exercise
 Paper 2 due: review of an educational ethnography
 Assignment: Do an observation/participation
- 10/4 **Marxist Educational Ethnography**
 Reading: *Learning to Labour*
 Gustavo Fischman guest speaker
- 10/11 **Classroom Ethnography**
 Reading: (not yet selected)
 Paper 3 due: observation/participation of an educational setting
 How to interview informants
 Assignment: interview an informant
- 10/18 **Comparative Educational Ethnography/Video Ethnography**
Preschool in Three Cultures

Watch Psin3C videos

- 10/25 **Adapting Teaching to Culture/Explaining Underachievement**
Readings: KEEP—Au, Jordan, Tharp (on Zuni), D'Amato
Reading: Jacob, Evelyn and Jordan, Cathie, Eds. Explaining the School Performance of Minority Students. Theme Issue, In *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 18(4), 1988
Paper 4 due: interview with one or more informants
- 11/1 **Post-colonial Perspectives on Ethnography**
Edward Said
Julie Kaomea
- 11/8 **Multisite Ethnography**
Reading: Marcus, G. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multisite ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 95-117.
- 11/15 **Cultural Continuity and Change: Synchronic and Diachronic Dimensions of Ethnography**
Continuity and Change in Preschool in Three Cultures
Watch new Psin3C videos
- 11/22 Undecided
- 11/29 **Childhood/Adolescent Cultures and Subcultures**
Reading

