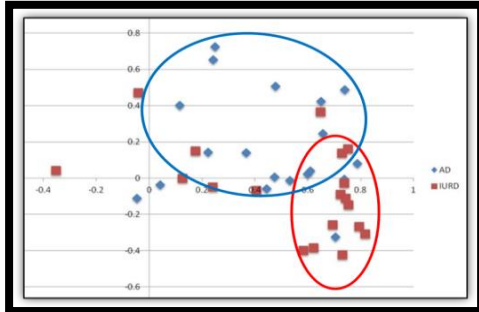# ANTH 4170

ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS: DIGITAL CULTURES

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This class will provide an overview of the various methods employed by anthropologists in the course of doing "fieldwork." Students will learn how to design and implement a research project, including Human Subjects Training, and qualitative/quantitative data analysis. This course is based on the philosophy of experiential teaching and the "flipped-classroom" approach. As such, students will carry out a research project, and share their experiences with one another in a collaborative learning environment. Students will be expected to use the data and insights from their project to create a research poster for display at a local/national conference.

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION
In this semester's course, students will examine the culture(s) present in the massively multiuser online game (MMO), *Guild Wars 2 (GW2)* and the multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA), *League of Legends (LoL).* Through the use of both qualitative and quantitative anthropological methods, as a class we will examine how these games create their own cultural systems, and how participation in these games provides players with opportunities for wondrous adventures akin to shamanic "magical flight," and potentially sources of distress and "addiction."

To participate meaningfully in this course, students must play *GW2* or *LoL* with other students in the class. Even the more experienced players will play on a shared server alongside the "noobs," committing to at least 1.5-2 hours of gaming a week. These shared play experiences will form the basis of ethnographic fieldnotes, which will introduce students to the game as well as to the class's baseline methods and theoretical perspectives.

COURSE GOALS
By the end of the course, students will:
1) Learn the steps of designing a research project
2) Gain experience using a variety of qualitative and quantitative data-gathering methods
3) Attain basic understanding of data analysis in SPSS and MAXQDA
4) Confidently employ anthropological methods in public and/or academic settings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Research Journal and Assignments: Students will keep a **WEEKLY** research journal throughout the semester. This research journal will **review**, **integrate**, and **expand** upon the **research**, **readings**, and **class discussions** of this course. When applicable, student will also present the findings and analysis of their ethnographic research assignments. **Rubrics for each assignment (*) are available on Canvas.** Because each assignment builds on the next, it is ESSENTIAL that each assignment is completed in a timely and professional manner. Unless otherwise stated in the rubric, each journal entry will be at least 600 words. This will comprise 30% of the final grade.

Article Club: Students, in teams of 2-3, will **identify** one journal article that addresses an **important aspect of digital cultures research** and/or **provides an example of a topical methodological approach**. Every Wednesday, selected students will lead class discussion (e.g., presentation, summary, discussion questions, activity, etc.) on the article. The article must be chosen **AT LEAST 1 WEEK** before discussion date, and approved by the professor. Students will lead a discussion twice over the course of the semester. These presentations will comprise 15% of the final grade.

Final Project-Research Poster: Students, singly or in groups of 2-3, will create a research poster to be presented at the end of the semester. Students will synthesize the data they collected throughout the semester to address a single research question/hypothesis. The poster will comprise 25% of the final grade.

Attendance and Participation: Students will be required to attend all classes and participate in discussions held in a seminar format. Students are expected to come to class having completed all readings and assignments. During class, they are expected to contribute to the class discussion and help one another on their research projects. Students will be evaluated on both their attendance and contribution to the class. Attendance and participation will comprise 30% of the final grade. After THREE missed classes (excused or unexcused), the student will lose 3.33% of a letter grade for each absence.

Research Journal and Assignments (30%) + Article Club (15%) + Final Project (25%) + Participation (30%) = FINAL GRADE

The course follows a round-table seminar format with intensive student-led discussions. The typical week will have the following format: Monday has the presentation of methods by Dr. Dengah. Wednesday will comprise a discussion of readings by students. Friday is a (REQUIRED) workshop to work on assignments in a collaborative setting.

REQUIRED READINGS
1. Bernard, Russell (2011) *Research Methods in Anthropology*, 5th ed. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

REQUIRED GAMES (choose at least one)
1. Guild Wars 2 (available at most retail stores, Amazon, etc.) DO NOT BUY USED.
2. League of Legends (available online: http://na.leagueoflegends.com/)

LOCATION OF REQUIRED READING MATERIALS
Required TEXTS may be purchased at USU Bookstore, Amazon, etc.
Assigned ARTICLES will be available on Canvas (C).

TOPICS & READINGS
(subject to change)

Bernard (2011) = B; Canvas Reading = C; * Denotes online rubric

Date	Topic	Reading Assignments	Assignment
Week 1 Aug. 31	Intro to Ethnographies of virtual worlds; Lit. Research	B: 1 C: 'I Swear to God, I Only Want People Here Who are Losers!': Cultural Dissonance and the Allure of Azeroth	
Workshop	Getting organized; demonstration of virtual worlds research		
Week 2 Sept 7, labor day	Ethics; Human Subjects Training	B: 12	CITI (IRB) Training* **DUE: Friday, 11:59pm**
Workshop	IRB Training		
Week 3 Sept 14	Participant-Observation: Field Notes	B: 13	Turn in Field Notes* **DUE: Friday before class**
Workshop	Managing fieldnotes with MAXQDA		
Week 4 Sept 21	Participant-Observation and Formulating a Research Question	B: 4	Field Notes 2 Analysis of all notes* **DUE: Friday, 11:59pm**
Workshop	Share field notes, research question; coding "themes" in MAXQDA		

Week 5 Sept 28	Interviews: Questions, methods, and techniques	B: 8	Interview draft (class) **Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm**
Workshop	Work on interview questions, interview methods		
Week 6 Oct 5	Interview Methods (cont.), transcription	B: 9, 10 (free list)	Conduct 1 FL/Semi-Structured Interview **Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm**
Workshop	Interview experiences, initial impressions; transcriptions		
Week 7 Oct 12 Th Oct 15, class	Structured Methods, Free-List Analysis	B: 10	1. Transcribed interview analysis* 2. Free-List Analysis (class) **Due: Friday, 11:59pm**
Workshop	Free-list Analysis, Visual Anthropac		
Week 8 Oct 19	Social Network Analysis: How to conduct the interview	C: Visualizing Social Networks	Conduct Social Network Interview **Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm**
Workshop	Social network analysis, EGONET		
Week 9 Oct 26	Social Network Analysis: How to analyze the data	C: Tastes, ties, and time: A new social network dataset using Facebook.com	Conduct Social Network Interview **Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm**
Workshop	Social network analysis, EGONET & UCINET		
Week 10 Nov 2	Structured Methods: Cultural Consensus, part 1	B: 16	Analysis of 2 Social Networks* **Due: Friday, 11:59pm**
Workshop	Social network analysis, EGONET & UCINET		
Week 11 Nov 9	Structured Methods: Cultural Consensus, part 2	C: Cultural Consonance and Mental Wellness in the World of Warcraft	Cultural Consensus Protocol (class) **Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm**
Workshop	Work on CC protocol (online), UCINET		
Week 12 Nov 16 Monday class only	Catch-up/TBD	OPEN	Interviews **E.C. Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm**

Week 13 Nov 23 Thanksgiving		OPEN	Interviews
Week 14 Nov 30	Cultural Consensus Analysis	H: 22	CC write-up* **DUE: Following Monday, 11:59pm**
Workshop	CC analysis		
Week 15 Dec 7	Bringing it together: Ethnography Workshop	OPEN	Rough Draft of Poster* **Due Wednesday 11:59pm**
Finals Week	Presentation of Project	OPEN	**Poster Presentations**

POLICIES

Classroom Conduct: Please be polite! Reading newspapers, sleeping, surfing the web, emailing, texting, answering the phone, coming in late, and talking are behaviors disrespectful to the instructor and the rest of the class and absolutely will not be tolerated. Students who persist in these behaviors may be excused from the class or even dropped from the course.

Late Work Policy**: I DO NOT allow for late assignments—so plan ahead.** This means completing your blog assignments before the due date. **Each assignment builds on the next; falling behind will be detrimental to your grade.**

Plagiarism: Don't do it. There will be 0 tolerance for plagiarism, and you will receive an F in the course. According to USU: "Plagiarism includes knowingly representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged used of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials."

Students with Disabilities:
Reasonable accommodation will be provided for all persons with disabilities in order to ensure equal participation within the program. If a student has a disability that will likely require some accommodation by the instructor, the student must contact the instructor and document the disability through the Disability Resource Center (797-2444), preferably during the first week of the course. Any request for special consideration relating to attendance, pedagogy, taking of examinations, etc., must be discussed with and approved by the instructor. In cooperation with the Disability Resource Center, course materials can be provided in alternative format, large print, audio, diskette, or Braille.