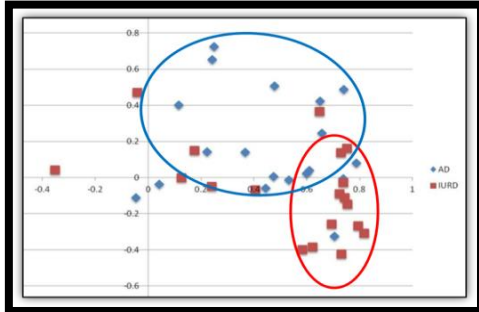


ANTH 4170

ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS: DIGITAL CULTURES



Course: MWF 1:30-2:20pm Eccles B. 209
H.J. François Dengah, Ph.D.
Office Hours: M/W/F 12-1pm or by appt

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will provide an overview of the various methods employed by anthropologists while 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)*. This will serve as our “field site” and “foreign” culture of study. 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* 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 UCINET, Antrhopac, 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.** On selected weeks (see calendar below), student teams 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 5% 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.
2. Boellstorff, Tom, Bonnie Nardi, Celia Pearce, and T.L. Taylor (2012) *Ethnography and virtual worlds: A handbook of method*. Princeton University Press.

REQUIRED GAME

1. Guild Wars 2 (free): <https://account.arena.net/register?alt=gw2>
2. Recommended: GW2: Heart of Thrones expansion (<http://buy.guildwars2.com/>)

MATERIALS

1. Recommended: Laptop (please bring to all Friday classes)

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; Boellstorff et al. (2012) = VW; Canvas Reading = C; * Online rubric

Date	Topic	Reading Assignments	Assignment
Week 1 Jan 9-13	Intro to Course	B: 1 VW: 1, 2	No F Class, work on CITI Training
<i>Workshop</i>	Getting organized; begin CITI training		
Week 2 Jan 18-20 <i>No M class</i>	Ethics; Human Subjects Training	B: 3 VW: 8, 9	CITI (IRB) Training* DUE: Friday, 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Playing in GW2 Together		
Week 3 Jan 23-27	Participant-Observation: Field Notes	B: 12 VW: 5	Turn in Field Notes* DUE: Friday noon
<i>Workshop</i>	Managing field notes with MAXQDA		
Week 4 Jan 30-Feb 3	Participant-Observation and Formulating a Research Question	B: 13 VW: 7	Field Notes 2 Analysis of all notes* DUE: Friday, 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Share field notes, research question; coding "themes" in MAXQDA		

Week 5 Feb 6-10	Interviews: Questions, methods, and techniques	B: 8 VW: 6	Interview draft (class) Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Work on interview questions, interview methods		
Week 6 Feb 13-17	Interview Methods (cont.), transcription	B: 10 VW: 10	Conduct 2 FL/Semi-Structured Interview Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Interview experiences, initial impressions; transcriptions		
Week 7 Feb 22-24 <i>No M/T class</i>	Structured Methods, Free-List Analysis	B: 16 Journal Club #1	1. Transcribed interview #1* 2. Free-List Analysis (class) Due: Friday, 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Free-list Analysis, Visual Anthropac		
Week 8 Feb 27-March 3	Structured Methods: Pile Sorts and Cultural Domain Analysis, part 1	C: Dressler Journal Club #2	1. Conduct #2 FL/Semi-Structured Interview 2. Free-List Analysis (class) Analysis Due: Friday, 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Free-list Analysis, Visual Anthropac		
Week 9	SPRING BREAK		
Week 10 March 3-17	Structured Methods: Pile Sorts and Cultural Domain Analysis, part 2	C: TBA Journal Club #3	1. Conduct 2 Pile sort Interviews 2. Cultural Domain Analysis Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Cultural Domain Analysis, UCINET, Anthropac		
Week 11 March 20-24	Structured Methods: Cultural Consensus Analysis	C: TBA Journal Club #4	1. Conduct 2 Pile sort Interview2 2. Cultural Consensus Analysis Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Cultural Consensus Analysis, UCINET		

Week 12 March 27-31	Society for Applied Anthropology Conference (NO CLASS)		
Week 13 April 3-7	Structured Methods: Cultural Consensus, part 2	C: Cultural Consonance and Mental Wellness in the World of Warcraft Journal Club #5	Cultural Domain/ Consensus Analysis Write-up* Due: Friday, 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Poster Ideas		
Week 14 April 10-14	How to Make a Poster SfAA Discussion	VW: 11 Journal Club #6	Journal Due: Friday, 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Poster		
Week 15 April 17-21	How to Make a Poster, part 2	Journal Club #7 Journal Club #8	Rough Draft of Poster* Due Monday 11:59pm
<i>Workshop</i>	Poster		
Week 16 April 24-28	Presentations	OPEN	Presentation of Posters
Finals Week	Final Posters Due: Wednesday, May 3rd 11:59pm		

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.