

SYA 7933/LAS 6938

Spring 2026

M | Period 8 - 10

3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

TUR 2333

Course instructor: Dr. Rebecca Hanson

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Office phone: 352-294-7191

Office hours: Wednesday 10:00am – 1:00pm or by appointment

All communication regarding this course should occur through Canvas mail, not via email. In other words, do not email me at r.hanson@ufl.edu about this course. I cannot guarantee a timely response if you email me about the course outside of Canvas. Any information sent to me about class (attendance, request for assignment extensions, etc.) outside of Canvas will not be considered valid.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This is an advanced graduate seminar on ethnographic field methods. This course introduces students to the theory and practice of ethnographic research, a central methodology in the social sciences more broadly. Students will learn how to conduct ethnographic projects through hands-on engagement with techniques such as participant observation and fieldnote writing. Throughout the course we will address the following questions: What is ethnographic research? How do you do it? How do we know that ethnography has been done well? And how do we keep our participants and ourselves safe when conducting this research? By the end of the course, students will have produced original fieldwork-based assignments and developed a critical understanding of ethnography as both a method and a mode of knowledge production. This seminar is a survey of the field. It provides a foundation on which you can build through subsequent coursework.

We do not have time in this course to learn about data analysis, but I regularly offer SYA 7933 Advanced Qualitative Methods. Much of this course is dedicated to learning about and practicing different approaches to data analysis.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2. Goffman, Alice. 2014. *On the run: fugitive life in an American city*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
3. Hanson, Rebecca and Patricia Richards. 2019. *Harassed: Gender, Bodies, and Ethnographic Research*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Available online through the UF library.
4. Hoang, Kimberly Kay. 2015. *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Available online through the UF library.

5. Nippert-Eng, Christena. 2015 *Watching Closely: A Guide to Ethnographic Observation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
6. Rush, Smith, Nicolas. 2019. *Contradictions of democracy: Vigilantism and rights in post-apartheid South Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
7. Small, Mario Luis and Jessica McCrory Calarco. 2022. *Qualitative Literacy: A Guide to Evaluating Ethnographic and Interview Research*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. [Available online through the UF library](#).

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

None.

CLASS POLICIES & CULTURE

This classroom will be an anti-racist space and sex, gender, and sexuality inclusive. I will not tolerate hate speech, homophobia, or sexism of any kind in classroom discussions, assignments, or anywhere else.

This is a graduate seminar, not a lecture-based course. Graduate seminars are a part of your development as a professional. They are integral to your transition from being an undergraduate student who receives knowledge and information in classes to a junior colleague engaged in constructive criticism and the production of knowledge.

Seminars are constructed in interaction, and the professor is more of a supervisor than a lecturer. I will provide a brief setup for some meetings and will try to provide an environment in which everyone feels comfortable participating, but responsibility for the seminar is borne collectively. The goal of this class is to learn by thinking, discussing and writing about issues of your interest.

This means that you must come to class prepared to discuss the readings, preferably with written comments and at least one question of your own. A rough guideline: everyone should speak at least once during each course meeting. If you feel uncomfortable speaking in groups, please schedule a time to meet with me so that we

can identify other ways for you to contribute to the collective knowledge building process.

The purpose of the graduate seminars is to provide:

- graduate students with exposure to a variety of research projects and activities in order to enrich their academic experience.
- an opportunity for graduate students to develop skills in presentation and discussion of research topics in a public forum.
- a space where students become active participants in contributing to the course and the direction it takes rather than being a passive receiver of information through lectures

In order to maintain a productive classroom environment for all, it is essential to listen carefully to others and to voice dissent in a respectful manner. Respect for your fellow students, your professor, and the educational process is expected at all times. If you tend to talk a lot, make sure it is not to the detriment of others who want to speak. Don't interrupt others. If someone who rarely speaks suddenly wants to voice their opinion, consider ceding the floor to them.

If you have questions about the seminar format and expectations, feel free to talk with me and/or review the following website: <https://grad.uw.edu/for-students-and-post-docs/core-programs/mentoring/mentor-memos/succeeding-in-a-graduate-seminar/>

Electronics policy: You must put away all electronic devices, including cell phones and laptops, during the class. Leaving these items out during class may result in a grade penalty. An exception will be made for tablets **with a stylus**. Tablets cannot be used for anything other than note taking. We will use laptops for some in-class activities so please bring them to class for this purpose only.

Please turn your phone on silent unless there are extenuating circumstances that require others be able to contact you.

Students should bring in printed versions of the readings and reading notes to each class. You may also make notes on paper. Graduate students should have access to free printing via their departments. There are also locations on campus that allow students to print for free, though the page number is limited. **If you do not have access to a printer, please talk to me on the first day of class.**

Accommodations: Students may find themselves limited in their ability to accomplish course requirements for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: autism, visible physical disability, non-visible physical disability or chronic illness, learning disability, mental illness, and bereavement processes. I aim to provide an inclusive and safe environment for all students and will work with the Disability Support Services and/or students to maintain an accessible and accommodating classroom. Please refer to the “[Get Started With the DRC](#)” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site for more information.

Some students seeking disability accommodations may choose to do so through non-medical routes. I recognize potential barriers to seeking medical disability accommodations and will work with students seeking non-medical disability accommodations to specify a plan of action, if needed. Please notify me as soon as possible of any accommodation needs.

Health and Counseling: Health and counseling services are available for students in at the UF Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>; 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Student Names and Personal Pronouns: I will refer to students with the name and pronoun that feels best for them in class or on assignments. Please advise me of any name or pronoun changes so I can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronoun are respected. If you need any assistance or support, please reach out to the LGBT Affairs, <https://lgbtq.multicultural.ufl.edu/>.

Inclusivity Statement: It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

Excused Absence Policy: Excused absences include serious or contagious illnesses, personal or family emergencies, university-sponsored activities, or religious holidays that require your absence from campus. You may be asked to provide documentation verifying your absence. If you know about an excused absence ahead of time, as in the case of a university sponsored-activity or religious holiday, let me know as soon as possible. Absences due to vacations, optional doctor appointments (e.g. teeth cleaning), or to be a spectator at an event are NOT excused. All other absences will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Late Work and Extensions: If you know you will not be able to turn in the assignment on time, please notify me as early as possible. Extensions must be arranged in advance. As a general rule I do not accept late work unless you have spoken with me about an extension before the due date. **Work missed due to excused absences can be made up without penalty, but it is up to the student to contact me about making up missed assignments.**

Grade Appeals: Grades will not be discussed via e-mail. If you have a question or a complaint about your grade, please contact me within 48 hours of posting to arrange a meeting time.

Honor Code: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our

peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.” See the UF Conduct Code website (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Course evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Use of AI Tools: This course permits you to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as chatbots, text generators, paraphrasers, summarizers, or solvers, to get guidance on assignments, as long as you do so in an ethical and responsible manner. Essentially, you can think of these tools as ways to help you learn but not to create work for assignments like discussion board posts, essays, presentation slides, and so on. AI is more like your tutor or TA, not a replacement for your independent thinking.

This means that you must:

- Not use AI tools to replace your own thinking or analysis or to avoid engaging with the course content.

- Cite or explain any AI tools you use. Provide the name of the AI tool, the date of access, the URL of the interface, and the specific prompt or query you used to generate the output.
- Be transparent and honest about how you used the AI tool and how it contributed to your assignment. Explain what you learned from the AI tool, how you verified its accuracy and reliability, how you integrated its output with your own work, and how you acknowledged its limitations and biases.

You are accountable for any mistakes or errors made by the AI tool. Always check and edit the output before submitting your work. If you discover any inaccuracies or inconsistencies in the output after submission, notify the instructor immediately and correct them as soon as possible.

Using AI tools in an unethical or irresponsible manner, such as copying or paraphrasing the output without citation or transparency, using the output as your own work without verification or integration, or using the output to misrepresent your knowledge or skills, is considered a form of academic dishonesty and will result in a zero grade for the assignment and possible disciplinary action. **If you have any questions about what constitutes ethical and responsible use of AI tools, please consult with the instructor before submitting your work.**

Whenever using AI tools include a statement along with the assignment explaining how they were used.

Reading Notes – Students will upload reading notes – 750 word minimum – for class **after January 12. Reading notes must be uploaded before class.** Reading notes should be uploaded as a Word document or PDF on Canvas. You will only receive credit for notes if you complete the assignment in a timely manner and critically engage with the texts. Each reading note is worth 2 points towards your final grade. You are allowed to miss one class session's reading notes without a grade penalty. Students who complete all reading notes will receive an additional 2 points toward their final grade.

Reading notes will be graded not only on timely submission, but also on engagement with the readings. Reading notes are not meant to summarize the texts we read. Instead think of them as a place to synthesize ideas, work through concepts, and develop your thoughts on each theory. As such, students may only use up to ~250 words of each reading note to summarize readings for the day. For the engagement portion of each reading note students must engage with specific portions and quotes from the text and avoid overly general comments and criticisms.

It is not necessary to engage with all assigned texts for the week. However, students must engage with at least two readings assigned for the week by putting them in dialogue with each other.

Reading notes help to prepare you for participation in each week's class discussion and to hone your interests. Consider using these notes to evaluate the readings and think about how they may be useful for thinking about your own research interests. If you do not find the readings for that class day helpful in thinking about your interests, you can write about why that is the case. You may also explore how readings from other class days speak to each other. **Make sure to include your name and the class date and topic for which they are written on your reading notes!!!**

Students are only allowed to use Chat GPT or other AI tools for the summary portion of this assignment. If you use AI tools for this purpose, you must cite them. The use of AI tools to produce any other portions of the reading notes may result in an automatic F for all reading notes. I will periodically use tools to estimate the likelihood that AI tools were used to prepare an essay. I will meet with students whose reading notes suggest use of AI tools or Chat GPT before deciding whether to take further action.

Leading Class – Each student will lead class at least two times during the semester. Students will lead class in pairs of two. Leading class includes two elements. First, the students assigned to a particular class will come up with questions for each of the assigned readings for the day. Second, class leaders will use their questions to direct discussion for most of the class session.

Rather than seeing this as a “test” of your leadership or teaching skills, think about this component as the chance to discuss and dig into the parts of the readings that you find most interesting or problematic. We will arrange student groups the first week of class.

I will lead class on January 26 so that students have an example of how to complete the assignment.

Class Participation – This is a discussion-based class. Careful preparation for each of the seminars and informed contribution is expected. Always bring a print copy of that day’s readings to class and come to the seminar with questions and ideas. Participation is necessary for students to identify which schools and theories they find most useful and learn how to defend these choices. Discussion, debate, and **constructive** criticism are all helpful in this process. While I may lecture at the beginning of some classes, much more time will be spent discussing, evaluating, and criticizing the readings assigned for the day. Classes will be much more beneficial if everyone comes to class prepared to discuss the readings, particularly in relation to your own research and interests. To receive credit your comments must demonstrate that you have done the assigned readings. **Though I will not take class attendance, to receive credit you must be in class to participate. Your participation grade will be calculated based on frequency of participation and quality of the comments. Your class participation grade also includes meaningful participation in the in-class exam activity.**

If you do not feel comfortable talking in a group setting, see me on the first day of class to discuss alternative assignments to count toward your participation grade.

Participation Rubric

Below are factors I will take into account in evaluating participation

	Exemplary	Proficient	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Frequency of participation in class	Student initiates contributions or meaningfully engages in ongoing discussions in 15 out of 15 classes	Student initiates contributions or meaningfully engages in ongoing discussions in between 10 and 14 classes out of 15 classes	Student initiates contributions or meaningfully engages in ongoing discussions in 8-10 classes out of 15 classes	Student initiates contributions or meaningfully engages in ongoing discussions in fewer than 8 classes out of 15 classes
Quality of comments made during participation	Comments represent genuine interest in class topics, engage with class readings and materials, and contribute to other comments that have been made.	Comments mostly represent genuine interest in class topics, engage with class readings and materials, and contribute to other comments that have been made. Occasionally comments are too general or not relevant to the discussion.	Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Student does not use appropriate terminology; comments not always relevant to the discussion.	Comments are rarely constructive or relevant to the discussion. Student does not use appropriate terminology or exhibit engagement with the readings.

Ethnographic fieldnotes and workshopping – Throughout the semester students will write ethnographic fieldnotes based in a participant observation project. Students will bring fieldnotes to class to receive peer feedback and to work on constructing ethnographic vignettes.

Students will submit a proposal for this project the second week of class for feedback. See the handout in Canvas for additional information.

Evaluation of an ethnographic monographic – Students will prepare an evaluation of a published ethnographic monograph, using the standards put forward in

Small and Calarco's Qualitative Literacy. This evaluation will be presented in class at the end of the semester. See the handout in Canvas for additional information

Final reflection paper – Students will submit a **short paper** at the end of class describing their methods, reflecting on their positionality, and presenting preliminary themes from fieldnotes. See the handout in Canvas for additional information.

Grading

Reading Notes	22
Leading Class	10
Class Participation	20
Ethnographic fieldnotes	28
Evaluation of an ethnographic monographic	10
Final reflection paper	10
Total	100

Grading Scale

A	94 and above
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	79-82
C+	76-78
C	72-75

C-	69-71
D+	66-68
D	62-65
D-	59-61
E	58 and below

This is an upper-level course. I assume that students have some background in qualitative methods and, for this reason, we will not cover the basics (for example: What is ethnographic research good for? What is the difference between qualitative and quantitative research?). If you need a refresher on qualitative methods, I suggest the following texts:

- Luker, Kristin. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Saldaña, Johnny. 2011. *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University

The syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

	All readings from required texts are indicated with three asterisks (***)	
Jan. 12	Introduction to class <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hammersley, Martyn. What is ethnography? Can it survive? Should it? 2. Hanson, Rebecca and Patricia Richards. Chapter 1, Ethnographic fixations*** 3. Jerolmack, Colin and Shamus Khan. Talk is cheap: Ethnography and the attitudinal fallacy, accounts and action debate 4. Jones, Julie Scott. A brief history of ethnography 	Mario Small on qualitative research
Jan. 19	NO CLASS	
Jan. 26	Approaches to ethnography <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goffman, Erving. On fieldwork 2. Hernandez, Jillian. Sexual-aesthetic excess: Or, how Chonga girls make class burn 3. Murillo Lafuente, Iblin Edelweiss. Spaces of Anti-Ableist, Feminist Resistance 4. Wedeen, Lisa. Ethnography as interpretive enterprise 	Guest speaker: Edelweiss Murillo Submit one-paragraph research proposal
Feb. 2	Approaches to ethnography <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Burawoy, Micheal. On Desmond: the limits of spontaneous sociology 2. Desmond, Matthew: Relational ethnography 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Salzinger, Leslie and Teresa Gowan. Macro Analysis: Power in the Field 4. Simmons, Erica S. and Nicholas Rush Smith. The case for comparative ethnography 5. Tavory, Iddo and Stefan Timmermans. Two cases of ethnography: Grounded theory and the extended case method 	
Feb. 9	Sampling and collecting ethnographic data <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, Chapters 1 and 2*** 2. Honigmann, John. Sampling in Ethnographic Fieldwork 3. Shadish, W.R. The logic of generalization: Five principles common to experiments and ethnographies. 4. Small, Mario. How many cases do I need? 	<p>Nippert Eng, Christena. Watching closely, Exercise 1***</p> <p>Practice taking field notes</p>
Feb. 16	Collecting ethnographic data <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, Chapter 3*** 2. Glaeser, Andreas. Times ajar 3. Nippert Eng, Christena. Watching closely, Exercises 2 & 4*** 4. Writing Live Fieldnotes: Towards a More Open Ethnography 	Practice temporal mapping
Feb. 23	Entering the field, safety, and confidentiality <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gaztambide-Fernández, Ruben and Adam Howard. Access, Status, and Representation: Some Reflections from Two Ethnographic Studies of Elite Schools 2. Hanson and Richards, Chapter 3: Sexual harassment in the field*** 3. Katz, Jack. Armor for Ethnographers 4. Jerolmack, Colin and Alexandra Murphy. The Ethical Dilemmas and Social Scientific Trade-offs of Masking in Ethnography 	Submit field notes and bring them to class
March 2	Ethics, positionality, and confidentiality	Guest speaker: Andrea Román Alfaro

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kahn, Shamus. The subpoena of ethnographic data 2. Román Alfaro, Andrea. Making Sense of Violence Through Women's Experiences: Meaning-Making, Gendering and Racialization at Peru's Urban Margins reading 3. Simpson, Bob. Ethical moments: future directions for ethical review and ethnography 4. Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology 	
March 9	Recent debates <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wacquant, Loic. The Poverty of the Ethnography of Poverty, Prologue and Chapters 2 and 3*** 	Submit field notes and bring them to class
March 16	NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK	
March 23	Reading ethnographies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hoang, Kimberley Kay. Dealing in desire, Introduction, Chapters 3, 5, 6, and Appendix*** 	Submit field notes and bring them to class
March 30	Evaluating ethnographic research <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small, Mario and Jessica Calarco. Qualitative literacy, Introduction and Chapters 1-5 	Submit field notes and bring them to class
April 6	Reading ethnographies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rush Smith, Nicolas. Contradictions of democracy: Vigilantism and rights in post-apartheid South Africa, Introduction, Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 6*** 	
April 13	Making claims with ethnographic data <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, Chapter 5*** 2. Becker, Howard. Cases, causes, conjunctures, stories, and imagery 3. Katz, Jack. Ethnography's Expanding Warrants 4. Tavory, Iddo and Stefan Timmermans, A pragmatist approach to causality in ethnography 5. Walton, John. Making the theoretical case 	Presentation of evaluations of ethnographies

April 20	Recent debates <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Goffman, Alice. On the run, Chapters 2, 3, and Appendix*** 2. Lewis-Kraus, Gideon. The trials of Alice Goffman 3. Lubet, Steven. Ethics on the run 4. Rios, Victor. Review of On the run 	Presentation of evaluations of ethnographies
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