

Ethnography of Languages and Literacies: A Doctoral Seminar Fall 2021

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Office hours: Wed 12-2pm via Zoom, and by appointment
Office: EDUC and via office hours Zoom link
Text: [Remind](#) (class code @XXXXXX)

COURSE INFORMATION

BED 6314-001 [CRN 17230]

3 credit hours, hybrid with in-person meetings some Tuesdays, 5:30-8:20pm in EDUC¹

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the study of languaging and literacies—their learning and use—in social context. We focus on how ethnography can be used to illuminate languaging and literacy practices and processes, as well as social injustice and inequities that result. We examine sociocultural, sociolinguistic, and linguistic anthropological theories that locate languages and literacies within their historical, cultural, and institutional contexts. Students will develop an ethnographic way of seeing languages, literacies, and people's lived experiences; they will develop a deep understanding of ethnographic data collection and analysis and of researcher reflexivity; and they will critically analyze ethnographic texts.

Ethnography is a form of inquiry that has emancipatory potential—that is, the potential to advance social justice and reduce inequity and marginalization—and ethnographers often think of their research as investigation through involvement with members of a community. One way of thinking about ethnography is as a process of building critical awareness: of making the strange familiar and the familiar strange.

A NOTE ON LEARNING DURING COVID-19

I am glad you are here. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, these continue to be extra stressful times, and we will acknowledge this in our work together. Why? Because stress interferes with learning. In contrast, wellness makes learning possible. Whenever our goal is learning, we must prioritize well-being. In this class, your well-being is my top priority. We will intentionally focus on building a supportive learning community, helping each other navigate the additional stress of the pandemic, and approaching each other with compassion, humanity, and flexibility. We will also work to keep each other safe (see COVID-19 precaution section below). Please do not be afraid to share what is going on for you—I will work with you to find ways to navigate these challenges and still experience the joy and accomplishment of learning in this course.

¹ The course is planned as a combination of in-person meetings and asynchronous online work, with one synchronous online session (Week 9). See the course overview and schedule below for which weeks are planned as in-person and which are planned as online. As pandemic conditions change in our community, our format may change, and I will keep you apprised of any changes.

COURSE OVERVIEW

WEEK	TOPIC	MEETING FORMAT	ASSIGNMENTS
1	Introduction—What is ethnography? Why ethnography?	Online asynchronous	Watch film, listen to podcast & read graphic novel
2	Ethnography of communication in context	In-person	Reading Choices for discussion leadership
3	The postmodern turn + decolonizing research	Online asynchronous	Reading
4	What is language/literacy? Theory and objects of analysis	In-person	Reading Choices of book for analysis
5	Ethnography and funds of knowledge	Online asynchronous	Reading
6	Social action through language: Performativity	In-person	Reading
7	Identity as practice	Online asynchronous	Reading Proposal for final paper topic
8	Discourse analysis	Online asynchronous	Reading
9	Ethnographies of language and literacies by UTEP faculty	Online SYNCHRONOUS (Tues, Oct 19, 5:30- 8:20pm)	Reading
10	Analyses of ethnography presentations	In-person	Presentation and paper
11	Humanizing research	Online asynchronous	Reading
12	Story as ethnography	In-person	Reading
13	Research for Action: Ethnographic monitoring and participatory action research	Online asynchronous	Reading
14	Work and consultation on literature reviews	Online asynchronous	(Thanksgiving) Individual work on literature review
15	Presentations of final papers	In-person	Presentation Final paper

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Many used copies of all of these books are available. I encourage you to secure your copies early in order to find the best price and to have it in time to complete the full reading before class the week that it is due.

Kaplan-Weinger, Judith and Ullman, Char (2015). *Methods for the Ethnography of Communication: Language in Use in Schools and Communities*. New York: Routledge. ISBN 9780415517775 (paperback). (Weeks 2 through 12)

- Philips, Susan U. (1983). *The Invisible Culture: Communication in Classroom and Community on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. ISBN 0881336947 (paperback). (Week 2)
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 3rd ed. New York: Zed Books. ISBN 978-1786998132 (paperback). (Week 3) (any edition is fine).
- González, Norma (2005). *I Am My Language: Discourses of Women and Children in the Borderlands*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press. ISBN 9780816525492 (paperback). (Week 5)
- Mendoza-Denton, Norma (2008). *Homegirls: Language and Cultural Practice among Latina Youth Gangs*. New York: Blackwell. ISBN 9780631234906. (Week 7)
- Kirkland, David E. (2013). *A Search Past Silence*. New York: Teachers College Press. ISBN 9780807754078 (paperback). (Week 12)

Additional readings are listed in the course schedule (below) and will be available on Blackboard or through the university library.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will

- Understand what ethnography and ethnography of communication are and the disciplinary contexts in which they have evolved
- Understand the history of ethnography in the context of colonialism and be able to critically examine (in)equity in ethnographic methods
- Understand different theoretical conceptualizations of language and literacies as objects of study
- Understand performativity and how language is used for social action
- Understand ethnographic approaches to identity as practice
- Have examined a sampling of discourse analytic tools used in ethnography
- Understand the role of ethnographic writing and story in the research methodology
- Have examined some of the ways that ethnography is used for applied and action research
- Have learned to identify and ask ethnographic questions
- Have critically analyzed and written about influential texts within the field of educational anthropology
- Have gained a greater awareness of your own and your colleagues' cultural backgrounds and the ways these continue to shape your choices and viewpoints
- Have a deeper understanding of whether or not you would like to pursue further ethnographic research yourself.

These learning outcomes will be achieved through respectful scholarly discussion, discussion leadership, in-class presentations, and a variety of writing assignments, including a final literature review. Students are responsible for coming to class having read the assigned

materials and having submitted required written assignments before class. Because this is a seminar, the emphasis is on scholarly discussion of the material.

ASSIGNMENTS

Discussion participation (29% of grade)

[10 points/discussion; 14 discussion; 140 points total] Your success in this course, as a doctoral-level seminar, depends upon your active participation, which includes the following:

- Being present for each full in-person class session in each of the weeks we meet, including arriving on time and staying until the end.
- Reading all of the required readings for each class session before that in-person session or online discussion.
- Thinking carefully about these readings and coming to in-person class and to online discussions prepared with questions, reflections, and connections between these readings and with other material in this or other courses. (See weekly reading syntheses below).
- Extensive verbal participation in each in-person class session and written participation in each online discussion, including the contribution of your ideas/questions/reflections as well as engagement with others' ideas/questions/reflections. Online discussions require initial posts that answer each of the prompts posed, as well as a minimum of two (2) responses to classmates' posts by the deadlines indicated.
- Extensive non-verbal participation in each in-person class session, including demonstrating active listening, thoughtful engagement, and growth across each discussion.

Weekly reading synthesis + discussion question (23% of grade)

[11 reflections at 10 points each, 110 points total] As a way of practicing thoughtful reading and preparation for class discussion, you will write a brief synthesis of the readings for each class session and include 1 question for discussion. The synthesis should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of all of the readings for that day, as well as thoughtful reflection and connection between the readings and across the course. These syntheses are brief versions of what you do when you write a review of literature, drawing connections across multiple works and illuminating patterns, contrasts, etc. With the synthesis, you will also include 1 thoughtfully composed discussion question that asks respondents to analyze, apply, or evaluate some aspect of the readings. A synthesis should be no more than 350 words, not including the discussion question.

Engagement in scholarly community (6% of grade)

[30 points total; 3 events at 10 points each]

EL3 Lab Coloquios

The EL3 Lab Coloquios are directly related to the target knowledge and skills in this course. I ask that you attend **three or more Coloquios** and, for each, submit a short assignment with the date of your attendance and a 150-word reflection on the event, including what you gained and what you would have liked to be different or remaining questions you have. All Coloquios will be accessible virtually. If you foresee that attending ANY of the Coloquios will be impossible for you, please talk with me before Week 3 to arrange for an alternative assignment.

Discussion leadership (10% of grade)

[50 points total] You will take responsibility for leading a **45-minute** discussion of readings for one of the in-person class sessions or designing and facilitating an online discussion during one of the online weeks. Your choices of sessions are due in Week 2 via Google form (link on BB).

Analysis of an ethnography (paper and presentation) (10% of grade)

[50 points total] You will choose a book-length ethnography that focuses on languages and/or literacies, read it in depth, write a 7-10 pp analysis of the work, and present this analysis in class.

Final literature review paper and presentation (21% of grade)

[100 points total] This final assignment will take the form of a critical review of the ethnographic literature on a theme or question related to your interests. Your review will address specific issues of your choosing, starting with texts and ideas from our course. This is a place for you to synthesize and expand upon ideas we have discussed and which you would like to pursue in more depth. Choose ideas/questions that are related to your tentative dissertation topic(s).

Summary of components of the course grade

Assignment	Points each	How many	Total	% of grade
Discussions	10	14	140	30%
Weekly reading syntheses + discussion question	10	11	110	23%
Engagement in scholarly community	10	3	30	6%
Discussion leadership	50	1	50	10%
Analysis of an ethnography	50	1	50	10%
Final literature review and presentation	100	1	100	21%
			480	100%

Grading Scale

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 59 and below

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Inclusiveness and equity

Learning happens only when we feel respected as a whole human being. My top priority in our classroom is to cultivate relationships of trust and respect and a sense that we see each other as whole, complex human beings. That you experience this in our classroom is important for the sake of your learning in our course *and* for the sake of your future students' learning, so that you know how to cultivate such relationships with them. To that end, I want you to know that all of you is welcome in our classroom space—all the parts of you as a person are welcome in our discussions, our activities, our assignments, and in our assessments. We are all complex people with a variety of perspectives, experiences, challenges, and resources—our gender identities, our sexual orientations, our religions, our races, our ethnicities, our economic statuses, our immigration statuses, our parenthoods, our veteran statuses, our ages, our languages, our abilities and disabilities. All the parts of you are welcome in our learning community to the extent that you feel comfortable bringing them in. I strive to show respect for the variety and wholeness in each of you, and I expect that each of you shows respect for each other as well. If you feel marginalized in our class, and you feel comfortable discussing it, I would like to know so that I can support you, protect you, and make changes that feel more inclusive and equitable. You can also talk with our Department Chair, Dr. Alyse Hachey, 915-747-7573 or ahachey@utep.edu, and/or you can report a complaint of discrimination to the University's Equal Opportunity Office, Kelly Hall, Third Floor, 915-747-5662 or eoaa@utep.edu.

COVID-19 precautions

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission (in which El Paso is now) wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. When we meet in person, I will be wearing my mask as the CDC recommends, and I strongly encourage you to do the same in order to keep everyone in our class (and their family members) as safe as possible.

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or are waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test. Please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing.

The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org.

Food insecurity, mental health, and access to support services

Learning happens only when our bodies and minds are well—and all of us occasionally face challenges to wellness that interfere with our learning. I want you to be aware of a variety of support services on campus that can help you navigate these challenges and obstacles. **The UTEP Food Pantry** is available to help address students' basic food needs, as well as needs for personal hygiene items and access to additional support programs for students and their families. It is located at Memorial Gym Room 105, hours and more information posted online at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/foodpantry/>. The office of **Counseling and Psychological Services** offers FREE mental health counseling, crisis counseling, and many workshops on wellness topics—all of which are free to UTEP students. Their hours and services are posted online at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/resources/services-students.html>. Additional support services and resources are listed at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/resources/index.html>. If you are facing an obstacle to your learning, I encourage you to check out these resources or let me know and I will be happy to help you find the supports you need. You are not alone.

Academic citations

Please provide APA-style in-text and bibliographic citations for all your written work.

Language policy for this course

You are encouraged to use and develop your biliteracy skills in this course. You may submit any written assignment in English or in Spanish or both. For discussion and other group work, including whole-class, the most important criterion is that everyone has an opportunity to understand and to be understood—thus, any discussion group may use any variety(ies) of Spanish, English, both, or any other language, as long as the members of the group agree. Translanguaging is always welcome!

Changes to the syllabus

Like ethnography, itself, I want this course to be responsive to the sometimes-shifting conditions of our class community: our discussions, our interests, our extant experiences, our needs for growth. Some changes may be made to the syllabus along the way. You will always be notified—or participate in the decision to make changes—and the updated syllabus made available on Blackboard. All versions have a version number in the header with the form year, month, day (e.g., 210823, for 2021 August 23).

Different abilities

If you have or believe you have a disability, you may wish to self-identify. You can do so by providing documentation to the Office of disabled Student Services located in Union E Room 203. Students who have been designated as disabled must reactivate their standing with the Office of Disabled Student Services on a yearly basis. Failure to report to this office will place a student on the inactive list and nullify benefits received. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or which may cause an emergency during class, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor

and/or the director of Disabled Student Services. The Disabled Student Services Office can be reached at <http://www.utep.edu/dsso/>, (915) 747-5148 (voice or TTY), or dss@utep.edu.

Academic integrity

Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of scholastic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating; plagiarism; collusion; the submission for credit of any work or materials that are not attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) and available in the Office of the Dean of Students, may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to failing grades on the work in question, to failing grades in the course, to suspension or dismissal among others. Refer to <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/> for further information.