Ethnographic Research Methods
Anthropology 3358 CRN 18312
Tuesday and Thursday 10:30-11:50 pm in Old Main Building 306
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Texas, El Paso

Dr. Víctor Vázquez
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Phone number: 915-747-6156
Office Hours: MW 10:30 am-11:30 am
TR 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm TA: Erik Otto
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Office: Old Main Building # 314
Office Hour: W 10:00-11:00 am
Phone number 915-747-5901

II. Course Description
This course focuses on the acquisition and application of ethnographic research methods used in the social sciences with a focus on ethnography as theory, method, and practice. This class will involve both intellectual and experiential learning; that is students will learn through course lectures, readings and discussions as well as hands-on ethnographic fieldwork or survey-based research. Topics covered in this class include the ethics of ethnographic research, as well as theoretical, methodological, and practical approaches to various ways of carrying out fieldwork. This course emphasizes taking systematic field notes, conducting participant-observation research, doing structured and unstructured interviews, data analysis, and transforming primary field data into written ethnographic documents. By utilizing various ethnographic methods, this course aims to link practical knowledge with disciplinary methodological and theoretical debates, as a way of applying ethnography as a social scientific methodology as a critical approach to learning about culture and society within the fields of Anthropology and Sociology.

This class has been designated as a Liberal Arts Honors Program [LAHP] course. It has received this designation because it features at least five of the Honors course criteria, which include student leadership, advanced readings and/or reviews, opportunities for intensive writing, opportunities for intensive research, opportunities to utilize technology, opportunities to make extensive use of campus resources, community-based experiences, pre-professional opportunities, and development of critical thinking. In broader terms,
this course is honors-designated because of its creativity and/or intellectual rigor, both of which are integral components of the Liberal Arts Honors Program. No additional coursework is necessary for this course to count towards the LAHP Honors minor. If you are not a member of the LAHP, and are interested in the program, please visit the LAHP website at http://academics.utep.edu/lahp.

II. Learning Goals and Objectives:

Knowledge:
* To learn how ethnographic research methods can be used in the study of culture;
* To understand cultural diversity by reflecting upon personal and external understandings of enculturation within their own social and historical contexts;
* To enhance research skills through participant observation, interviewing techniques, and reflexivity; and
* To understand how ethnography involves qualitative, quantitative, and comparative methods.

Values:
* To recognize that anthropology is built on the practice of fieldwork, data analysis and interpretation;
* To develop a respect for human beings, for their uniqueness, individuality, worth and dignity;
* To understand that many individuals are born and raised in culturally different settings with value systems that may not be the same as the prevailing value system in a given society; and
* To acknowledge the history of ethnographic research and to develop a commitment to confidentiality and other ethical research practices.

Skills:
* To demonstrate critical understanding of ethical considerations in ethnographic research;
* To conduct ethnographic research using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods;
* To use ethnographic methods for social science research, community based studies, and applied work;
* To systematic record fieldwork practices, organize and present ethnographic data;
* To demonstrate confidence in identifying and interviewing key informants, entering research sites, and conducting primary field-based research;
* To examine how fieldwork contributes to our understanding of culture and cultural variation;
* To assist in a literature review of Central American migrants and refugees in the U.S.; and
* To write and present quality ethnographic materials.

Student Support Services. The Center for Accommodation and Support Services is available to register for services and to make necessary accommodations for quizzes, exams, and note takers (visit the Student Union East, Room 106, 747-5148). Please speak to me early in the semester to make arrangements to accommodate your needs. The University Counseling Center is located at 202 Union West, 747-5302, for walk in appointments and career, study skills, and personal worth workshops. The Student Health Center is located in the Union Building East, Suite 100, 747-5624. The University Writing Center is located in the UTEP library Room 227 for drop in tutoring and assistance with your writing assignments and final paper. I strongly encourage you to seek help if and when you need it throughout the semester.

III. Required Course Texts and Materials:


Additional Course Readings (CR’s) will be made available on Blackboard as PDF files or as class handouts.

**Research Supplies and Equipment:**

To take your field notes, you will need small and medium sized bound composition notebooks and/or sketching paper. You will also need different colored pens and highlighters for the editing and revision process of your writing assignments. You will need a digital voice recorder or tape recorder for conducting and recording interviews (look for digital recorders with USB connections to facilitate downloading data to your computer). Free access (with UTEP ID) to a digital camera or digital video recording equipment is made possible at the UTEP library media center on the 3rd floor.

**IV. Course Requirements:**

**A. Class Attendance and Participation Assignments (CAPA’s = 100 points).** Attendance and participation in class are important. Courses will begin with writing prompts based on the course readings and topics in the first 5 minutes of class. While in class, you will be involved in the critical analysis of course readings and engaged participation in class lectures and discussions. There will also be short in-class or take home assignments to practice particular ethnographic techniques such as interviewing, coding qualitative data, and writing mechanics known as CAPA’s. Students are encouraged to participate in class by discussing course readings as part of their course attendance and participation credit.

**Ethnographic Methods Field Assignments Menu:**

**Participant observation/Culture Plunge.** Select a culturally distinctive place or event to conduct participant observation research in which you are not currently acquainted with or comfortable with. **Take detailed field notes** of the place, people and activities of the event, and specifically describe **at least 3 distinct cultural scenes** you observed. Pay attention to how this place/space is used, while also taking note of the people’s verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. Write a 2 to 3 page, double-spaced narrative essay that describes your personal observations and interaction(s) with others as well as your critical descriptions, reflections and interpretations of the social interactions you observed. Your goal is to **describe and interpret** the social events that took place in the space(s) you have observed. The place or event may be photographed or video-recorded if permission is acquired. Assignment may be done individually or as a team (2-3 people).
Participant Observation is due on Goals: To develop skills in participant observation, entering new field sites, taking field notes, and to develop detailed description and critical reflection skills.

Life and Labor Interview Midterm. Students are to contact a person to interview, gain a signed consent form, develop semi-structured open-ended interview questions, conduct and record the interview, transcribe at least 3-4 pages of the interview, code the interview to identify key themes in the person’s narrative, write a 2 paragraph abstract of the interview, and then write a 2-3 page synthesis of the interviewee’s life and labor history. Goals: To develop skills in listening and interviewing, transcription, qualitative data analysis, coding, and the ability to synthesize, and write about critical events in a person’s life and labor history. Assignment may be done individually or as a team (2-3 people).

Autoethnography and Life Chart. This is a reflexive autobiographical assignment based on Leigh Berger & Carolyn Ellis “Composing Autoethnographic Stories,” in Angrosino’s book (161-176), and G.G. Núñez’s In Search of the Next Harvest IN Homelands: Women’s Journeys Across Race, Place, and Time, and Ramirez' Life Charts (Ch 4 in Against Machismo). Write a 4-5-page autoethnographic narrative written in the first person. Students are to select a key social issue or topic of personal interest, identify one theoretical perspective to address this issue, provide a one-page literature review of how this topic is addressed in anthropology/sociology, and tie your personal experience to this topic. Life Charts should have at least three lines of reflection, academics, family, labor history, and significant others in your life. A reflection describing your life chart and analyzing key themes and patterns in your life chart should accompany your work. Autoethnography and life chart. Goals: To develop skills in writing, linking personal insights with social science theory, and critical reflection.

C. Quizzes. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions and will cover your course readings, and lectures (Each quiz is worth 10 points for a total of 100 points). Class attendance, reading presentations, and discussions will help contribute questions and content for your quizzes. Goals: To encourage reading, note-taking, critical analysis, and comprehension of course topics and materials.

D. Final Paper Ethnographic Research Proposal (Written and Oral Report) based on Independent Research Project (100 points). Students are to choose from: 1) doing an applied research practicum coordinated by the Center for Civic Engagement and writing a final paper based on their service learning experience; 2) develop a research question, designing research tools, and conducting a literature review of the topic (10 academic sources) and conduct their own ethnographic research project to write a “mini-ethnography” on a local sub-cultural group in the community; 3) students with media backgrounds can design, produce, and generate a video-ethnography (15-20 minutes in length.); or 4) current research effort or special project including participation with La Fe Preparatory School, physical activity among youth/older adults, indigenous immigration, food/culture and/or other issues pertaining to U.S.-Mexico border communities. Goals: To develop critical research skills based on individual interests and future application of social science in career goals.

*Students will prepare a 15-minute oral presentation of their research project in class at the end of the semester in the form of a conference talk: Introduction, Community of Study, Research Question, Theoretical framework, Methods, Key Findings, and Future Research Goals.

Deadlines for Final Paper Proposal:
This project involves conducting a research project on Option 1 or 2 related to ethnographic research methods. You will define the topic, write a research design, carry out the study, analyze your data, and write up your results. You may do your project on one of the three options discussed above or another topic discussed and approved by your professor.

One-paragraph description of research proposal. 10 points

**research design**, annotated bibliography, and interview questions or description of your Service Learning location with brief history, mission, population served, etc. The research design defines the problem or question you are researching and describes how you will gather data: interviews, participant-observation, library research, mapping, photography, etc. Additional pages with interview questions must be included. A briefly annotated bibliography with at least three scholarly sources must be included. 25 points

**data report**: a description of your data and how you plan to organize and analyze them. It should include an outline of your paper. The data report should also contain copies of the raw data, such as: notes on readings, interview notes or transcriptions, participant observation notes, maps, photos, etc. 25 points

Final Paper Proposal Rubrics @4000 word (10-15 pages) research paper due with the following sections:
- abstract
- Introduction- Explain the main objective of the proposal. Describe the community, the informants, the relevance’s of the project. Remember is a proposal. A historical background. (3pgs)
- Theory- discuss at least of three theories related with your proposal. (1-2 pgs.)
- Methods- discuss the main methods, how long will be the fieldwork phase. (1-2pgs)
- Findings – how this ethnography will be able to contribute to the society.
- Significance of the research
- Challenges and ways, you would address them if you were to do the project again
- Future Research Goals
- Conclusion
- attach to your paper typed field notes, evidence of hours completed for SL option, maps, or photographs. For ideas on mapping and documenting public spaces, see http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/17/technology/internet/17maps.html?

Goals of Service Learning/Ethnographic Research: To encourage first hand fieldwork experiences, participant observation, systematic documentation and critical reflection via the systematic taking of field notes, data analysis via coding, writing and editing a final ethnography. Nothing will ever compare to having first-hand research experience.

Tips for Succeeding in this Class:

1. **Field notes**: The systematic writing of field notes is important in doing ethnographic research. Write during or **within 24 hours** of your participant observation experiences. Add the dates, times, and locations of your interviews, and type up your notes as soon as possible. Your field notes are your raw data, your typed notes will help you code key themes, and identify great quotes and examples to incorporate in your papers and in your final ethnography. I will review the field note-taking process, but you can use a double-entry process using Word to make two columns. On the left column describe objective descriptions including what you see, hear,
experience; and on the right column provide your own subjective interpretations, thoughts, and reflections on what you have experienced.

2. **Reading and Note-taking:** As you read, I suggest you use a double-entry log of your reading notes, and your thoughts/reflections of the material. In your notes, remember to include page numbers, key definitions, “direct quotes,” examples, and visuals for later recall.

3. **Writing:** 
   - **Pre-writing:** Start early on your fieldwork assignments, work on a draft, and let it sit for a day, and then look at it with fresh eyes and revise. 
   - **Brainstorming:** When deciding what to study or who to interview, try a brainstorming exercise with lists or clusters to get your ideas going. 
   - **Drafting:** Write a rough draft in one sitting. Walk away. Rest. Do something else before returning to your work. 
   - **Revising:** Reread your draft and revise. Sharpen your key sentences and your paragraph structure. Look for evidence and examples of your key topics from your interview field notes/recordings. 
   - **Editing:** When satisfied with the content and structure of your paper, read it aloud, slowly, and improve language, typos, and grammatical errors. Ask another person to read and edit your work if necessary. 
   - **Turn it in on time.** Writing is an on-going process; your work does not have to be perfect, but it does need to get done. We will continue to work on improving our interviewing, listening, observing, note-taking, synthesizing, critical thinking, and writing skills throughout the semester. **Avoid Procrastinating and get an early start on your reading and writing assignments.**

4. **Technology in the Classroom:** Turn off your cell phones or place them on vibrate/silent mode while in class. No surfing the web, texting or text messaging during class or during exams. If you bring your laptop to class, you are expected to stay on task, take notes and actively participate. If you prefer to surf the web or text during class lectures or discussions, you will be asked to leave the class and will receive a zero for class-participation credit.

E. **Grade Breakdown**

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<tr>
<th>Class Attendance, Fieldwork Assignments, Quizzes and Debates</th>
<th>Midterm Interview</th>
<th>Final Paper Ethnography Proposal Written and Oral Report</th>
<th>Percentage Points</th>
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<td>100 points</td>
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<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<td>90 to 100% = A</td>
<td>80 to 89% = B</td>
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<td>60 to 69% = D</td>
<td>59% and below = F</td>
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F. **Important Note about Academic Integrity and research ethics.** Students must present their own efforts and contributions in all assignments and examinations. Cheating, plagiarism, and falsifying research data will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is taking someone else’s work and representing it as one’s own. Honesty and respect for your work and the work of others is essential to your success in this course and in your academic career.

Follow the Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association found at Principles of Professional Responsibility at: http://ethics.aaanet.org/ethics-statement-0-preamble/. Understand that as a UTEP student you represent the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, as well as the overall university at all times. Be respectful of yourself, your classmates, your professor, your scholarship, community, and research informants during the length of your research. In conducting fieldwork, practice safety and common sense in selecting your informants and conducting your fieldwork.
G. A Note on the use of Photography and Video. The use of photographs in ethnography is tricky and requires consideration particularly when working with minors, Native American, women of particular faiths, and with “hidden” populations in our society who do not wish to be photographed. Be respectful of people's privacy, cultural and religious practices. Always seek consent and approval before taking pictures or video-tapping people's activities. If people wish to have their faces concealed, you will need to make the appropriate modifications to respect their rights.

H. Writing Groups and Writing Center: Students will form small groups to create learning communities at the beginning of the semester to offer one another constructive feedback on your research and writing projects. For individualized support with your writing, I encourage you to visit the University Writing Center located on the second floor in the main entrance of the library.

Through the Ethnography Research will be able to problematizing and propose solutions to the main problems in the Border. Dr. Vázquez.

International Bridge Americas (Libre)  
By Dr. Vazquez 2017

Course Outline and Class Schedule Fall 2018*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week and Dates</th>
<th>Lecture Topics</th>
<th>Readings Assignments Due</th>
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| Wk 1 August 28 – 30 | Course Introduction/ Syllabus review  
Anthropological values and worldviews  
What is Ethnography? What is doing Ethnography? What is the power of stories?  
General Concepts of Ethnographic Research.  
Fieldwork Experiences in: | To read this week:  
Humanity Book Chapter 6 Methods of Investigation (117-133).  
Documentary:  
*Tales From The Jungle: Malinowski |
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<th>Week</th>
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| Wk 2 | September 4-6 | The Goals of Social Science Research, and Selecting a Research Topic.  
What does an Ethnography look like?  
How is an ethnography organized? Hint: read the conclusion of the book you have chosen, browse the table of Contents, and then read the intro.  
What theory/methods were used?  
What culture was studied? How  
Was this study done? What did the Author add to the study of this Group of people? |
| To read this week: | | Discuss Murchison Chapters 1-2 & Angrosino (1-18) in class. Come prepared with your notes. I will ask you to “Tell me about your readings.” |
| Firs Assignment (10 pts.) | | Ethnographic exercise: describe in class your community. Explain the main problems, the daily life, describe the residents, etc. |
| Wk 3 | September 11-13 | Research Design and writing up a research proposal  
Brainstorming Topics of interest and preliminary literature review  
Learn how to Actively listen  
Class Participation Exercise.  
Conduct a participant observation exercise. Present a short presentation in class. |
| To read this week: | | Murchison Chapters 3-4: |
| Second Assignment (10 pts.) | | Do a 30-minute practice observation of people and new trends on campus. Look for patterns, similarities, and anything out of the ordinary. Write a 1-page story (3-4 paragraphs single spaced) of the first week of the semester at UTEP with rich details observed. Bring your story for class discussion on Thursday. Upload on blackboard the written due date Friday 14.  
Discuss a short presentation your 30-minute observations written in a short story format in class on Thursday. Give your story a great title, start it with a great hook to catch your reader’s attention, and provide details to take your reader to the location you observed. |
| Wk. 4 | September 18-20 | Research Ethics/Ethical Scenarios  
Discuss real-world ethical scenarios. Review AAA Code of |
<p>| To read this week: | | Chapter 9 Politics Cooperation Conflict and Power Relations (236 -245) Cultural Anthropology Welsch Robert L. / Vivanco |</p>
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 25 - 27</td>
<td>Open-ended Observation and writing field notes- Entering the Field in Ethnographic Research, Jottings and Field notes</td>
<td>Discuss Participant Observation assignments in class</td>
<td>To read this week: Exploratory or Open-ended Observation and Angrosino 83-90 by Borman et al; and Murchison Chapter 5.</td>
<td>Quiz on Week 5 lecture and readings Friday-Monday. Preproposal Brain storming Exercise (10 pts) TH, 27 Upload on blackboard One-paragraph description of research proposal and discuss in class.</td>
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<td>Wk. 6</td>
<td>Identifying and Interviewing Informants in Ethnographic Research</td>
<td>To Read this Week: Angrosino 19-32; Angrosino pp. 33-44, and Murchison Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.</td>
<td>CAPA: Mapping out a kinship diagram.</td>
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<td>October 2-4</td>
<td>Conducting In-Depth, Open Ended Life and Labor History Interviews/Genealogies</td>
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<td>Wk. 7</td>
<td>Transcribing, coding, memoing, and Analyzing field notes</td>
<td>To Read this Week: Murchison Chapter 8; Angrosino 45 to 62.</td>
<td>Class Discussions of Life Histories</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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<td>Wk. 8</td>
<td>October 16-18</td>
<td>Elaborate your midterm interview. Digital video cameras may be checked out from the 3rd floor of the UTEP library with your student ID. You can also reserve a study group room to conduct your interview on campus. Upload your sample interview on Youtube or Vimeo. Discuss in class on Thursday 18.</td>
<td>Life and Labor History questions draft (10 pts) upload on blackboard October 12. Discuss in class a description of your interview, informant and topics.</td>
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<td>Wk. 9</td>
<td>October 23-25</td>
<td>Mapping and Seeking emic meanings while Analyzing Narrative Data A brief analysis of The Ethnographic Research accomplished in the Caribbean.</td>
<td>(100)pts) Discuss in class the video of your interview and the main interpretation. 15 minutes presentation. Upload the transcription of your interview on blackboard due date October 22.</td>
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<td>Wk. 10</td>
<td>October 30-November 1</td>
<td>Ethnographic Research focused on Inequality and Violence.</td>
<td>To Read this Week: The Killing Consensus (Selected readings) Graham Denyer Willis (2015) Death Without Weeping (Selected readings) Nancy Sheper-Hughes (1993) Quiz in class (10 pts) Analysis of the Inequality by the ethnographic approach.</td>
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<td>Wk. 11</td>
<td>November 6-8</td>
<td>Ethnographic film analysis City of God (2002)</td>
<td>Analysis of the Inner-city in City of God (20 pts) Due date November 11 upload on blackboard.</td>
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<td>Wk. 12</td>
<td>November 13-15</td>
<td>Writing Auto-Ethnography. Make arrangements for the Auto–ethnography.</td>
<td>To read before class: Murchison Chapter 14-15; Examine the Núñez and Heyman Entrapment Article (Read PDF before coming to class) Elaborate your Auto-ethnography and discuss in class.</td>
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(20 pts). Upload on blackboard the written due date November 18.

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<th>Wk. 13 November 20</th>
<th>Discuss in class your Auto-ethnography.</th>
<th>Presentations Auto-ethnography.</th>
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<td>Wk. 15 December 4-6</td>
<td>The Challenge of Ethnographic research/The pertinence of the Ethnographic Research in El Paso. Recap.</td>
<td>To read this week: Humanity Book Chapter 17 World Problems and the Practice of Anthropology (385-406).</td>
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Note: Syllabus and Course Schedule Subject to Modifications.

Final Paper Proposals (50 pts.) The Oral Presentation will be the same day of the final exam day. Upload the written final paper (50 pts.) -on blackboard the same day of the oral presentation. Verify the rubrics, guideline and glossary on Blackboard.

**Accountability Partners/Learning Community Members**

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Consent Form

My name is ____________________. I am a student at the University of Texas in El Paso (UTEP). As part of the class I am taking on Ethnographic Research Methods, I am required to conduct a short-term research project. I have chosen to do my research on __________. Your involvement in this project will contribute towards my personal and academic development by allowing me to fulfill my research requirement for this class.

Please understand that your participation in this research is voluntary and that you may withdraw at any time or decline to answer any question you choose. I would like to assure you that your responses will be held strictly confidential and that your actual personal identity will not be used in any publication(s).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my Professor, Dr. Victor Vazquez at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at UT El Paso at (915) 747-6529.

__________________________________________  __________________________________________
Name of Participant                            Name of Researcher

__________________________________________  __________________________________________
Signature of Participant                        Signature of Researcher

__________________________________________  __________________________________________
Phone number or contact information            Phone number or contact information

DATE: ____________________
Consentimiento para ser entrevistado/a

Mi nombre es ____________________. Soy estudiante en la Universidad de Texas en El Paso (UTEP). Como requisito para mi curso de metodología estaré haciendo un estudio. Yo he decidido estudiar ______________. Su participación en este proyecto va a contribuir a mi desarrollo personal y profesional al apoyarme a cumplir con mis estudios.

Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria, ya que tiene el derecho de no contestar alguna pregunta que usted desee o dejar de participar en este estudio en cualquier momento. Deseo asegurarle que sus respuestas serán tratadas con respeto y confidencialidad. Su nombre o apellido no serán identificados en ningún documento o publicación si usted así lo desea.

Si tiene preguntas, favor de comunicarse con mi profesora, Dra. Vazquez en el departamento de Sociología y Antropología en UTEP al (915) 747-6529.

___________________________  __________________________
Nombre del participante        Nombre del estudiante

___________________________  __________________________
Firma del participante         Firma del estudiante

___________________________  __________________________
Teléfono                      Teléfono

___________________________
Fecha de la entrevista