

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN MARCOS  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

**EDUC 643: Critical Ethnography in Education**

UH 373 Tuesday 5-8:15 pm - Spring 2009

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Office Hours: University Hall 414, Tuesdays 8:15-9 pm or by appointment

**College of Education Mission Statement**

The mission of the College of Education Community is to collaboratively transform public education by preparing thoughtful educators and advancing professional practices. We are committed to diversity, educational equity, and social justice, exemplified through reflective teaching, life-long learning, innovative research and on-going service. Our practices demonstrate a commitment to student-centered education, diversity, collaboration, professionalism, and shared governance. (Adopted by COE Governance Community, October, 1997).

**Course Description**

This course examines the nature of ethnography as a standard tool of investigation in describing, understanding, and explaining the behavior of individuals. We will use ethnography as a tool to examine and explore public school classrooms and teaching practice from a critical pedagogy perspective. Students will understand the complexity of human learning by making familiar the activities of “other” people and thus, make “strange” our own familiar teaching / learning practices when placed against the “eyes” of other people.

**Course Objectives**

**Enduring Understandings**

- Use: Ethnography can be a useful tool for understanding behaviors of individuals (answering research questions).
- Ethics: Ethical ethnographic research is reciprocal, harmless, and socially just.
- Process:
  - Differentiate between inductive verses deductive research.
  - Differentiate between emic/insider and etic/outsider perspectives and its impact.
- Product: Since art can be more expressive than words, then art-based research can be a useful strategy for disseminating research findings.

**Essential Questions**

- Use: How can ethnography help educators (you) conduct research in schools and communities and ultimately improve education?
- Ethics: How do we predict consequences or evaluate our own potential to do harm? How do we reflect upon and evaluate our own purpose, intentions, and frames of analysis as researchers?
- Process: How do we create and maintain a dialogue of collaboration in our research projects between ourselves and Others? How is the specificity of the local story relevant to the broader meanings and operations of the human condition? How – in what location or through what intervention – will our work make the greatest contributions to equity, freedom, and justice? Will your research question best be answered inductively or deductively? How are you an emic/insider or etic/outsider in your research? And how can you make sense of the perspective? And how does your perspective position you as a researcher?
- Product: How can educators (you) use art to disseminate research findings?

## **Required Texts & Visual Arts**

**1. Madison, D. Soyini. (2005). *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN 978-0-7619-2916-1, \$50.95**

**2. Electronic Readings via Library Reserves & WebCT.**

**3. Art-Based Research Readings and Art (Textbook and Online Readings)**

You will be assigned one of art-based research areas and will read/watch the materials identified in the designated WebCT Learning Module, including the following text.

### ***Textual Art***

Lather, Patricia & Smithies, Chris. (1999). *Troubling Angels*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press. ISBN 978-0813390161, \$31.50.

### ***Fiction***

Alexie, Sherman. (1995). *Reservation Blues*. NY: Grove Press. ISBN 978-0802141903, \$ 13.00.

### ***2-D & 3 D Art***

Irwin, Rita & de Cossen, A/r/tography: *Rendering Self-Through Arts-Based Living Inquiry*. Vancouver, BC: Pacific Education Press. ISBN 978-1-895766-707, \$34.95.

### ***Photo Essays***

Coles, Robert. (1998). *Doing Documentary Work*, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780195124958, \$ 19.95.

### ***Acting***

Deavere Smith, Anna. (2006). *Letters to a Young Artist: Straight-up Advice on Making a Life in the Arts-For Actors, Performers, Writers, and Artists of Every Kind*, Norwell, MA: Anchor Press. ISBN 978-1400032389, \$11.00.

### ***Video Documentary***

Coles, Robert. (1998). *Doing Documentary Work*, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780195124958, \$ 19.95.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1 - Jan 20: Introduction to Ethnography**

BUY Books

REVIEW Syllabus

READ Chapters 1-3 of Madison, D.Soyini. (2005). *Critical Ethnography*.

Critical Ethnography, Chapter 1: Introduction to Critical Ethnography, p. 1-16

Critical Ethnography, Chapters 2: Methods, p. 17-42

Critical Ethnography, Chapters 3: Three Stories, p. 43-78

### ***Reading Responses 1-3 (RR)***

RR1. Describe how one of the three researchers in the Chapter 3 case studies (Joan, Robert or Nia) are "positioned" Madison, 2005, p. 5-8)? How are the researchers insiders or outsiders? How do they acknowledge their power, privilege and biases? How do they examine their intentions, methods and their possible effects in terms of their research paradigm, authority and moral responsibility relative to representation and interpretation?

RR2. Describe how one of the researchers in Chapter 3 (Joan, Robert or Nia) uses theory to inform his/her methodology and interpretations of the data collected? How do the researcher's

questions guide this process (Madison, 2005, Chapter 2)? Describe which process in Chapter 2 is modeled by your researcher.

RR3. Write a draft of your "lay summary" (Madison, 2005, p. 23-25). How would you describe your research design to your research participants? (This can be a draft for your consent letter.) Address the lay summary guiding questions (Madison, 2005, p. 23-25):

- a. Who are you?
- b. What are you doing & Why?
- c. What will you do with the results?
- d. How were participants selected?
- e. What are the possible benefits or risks to participants?
- f. How will you assure confidentiality and anonymity?
- g. How often and how long would you like to meet for interviews and observations?
- h. How and in what manner will you ask participants permission to document their words and actions?

### **Week 2 - Jan 27: Integrated Thematic Units (ITU)**

READ Mortenson, Peter & Kirsch, Gesa. (Eds.) (1996). *Ethics and Representation in Qualitative Studies of Literacy*, Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Choose 1 of the 3 chapters to read:

Chapter 3: Dealing with Data, p.40-57

Chapter 5: Dilemmas of Fidelity, p. 77-94

OR

Chapter 6: Ethnography and the Problem of the Other, p.97-114.

RR4. What ethical model will you follow or not and why?

READ Tuhiwah Smith, Linda. (1999). *Articulating an Indigenous Research Agenda*, in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, pp. 123-141.

RR5. In regards to readings by Mortenson & Gesa (1996) and Tuhiwah Smith (2000), in what ways will you be an insider/outsider in your research and how will those positions create limits or possibilities for you?

READ Richardson, Laurel. (2000). *Evaluating Ethnography*, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(2), pp.253-255.

RR6. Which of Laurel Richardson's criteria are your strengths and which criteria will you need to improve?

Option to attend Anne & Jeff Green's Vista High ITU Presentation  
4-5 pm UH 443

### **Week 3 - Feb 3: Art & Technology in Teaching & Learning**

READ 2 items:

Cahnmann-Taylor, Melissa, Eisner, Elliott, Baron, Tom. (2008). in Melissa Cahnmann-Taylor & Richard Siegesmund (Ed.), *Challenges to the definition and acceptance of arts-based inquiry as research*, *Art-Based Research in Education* NY: Routledge, pp. 1-49. (CSUSM Library Electronic Reserve Item)

&

one of the following based on your preference for research methodology:

- Action Research Booklet (Web link)
- Case Study (Web link)
- Ethnography (Observations) as a Logic of Inquiry (Article)

RR7. How would this methodology serve your research goals to help you answer your research questions?

RR8. Based on the reading, what methodological strategies will you incorporate in your work?

Option to attend Jeff Heil's Art & Technology In Teaching Presentation  
4-5 pm UH 443

**Week 4 - Feb 10: Ethnographic Methodology**

READ Madison, D.Soyini. (2005). *Critical Ethnography*. Chapter 4-6, p. 79-148.

Chapter 4: Ethics, pp. 79-108

Chapter 5: Methods & Ethics, p. 109-130

Chapter 6: Methods & Applications, p. 131-148

RR9. Describe how one of the researchers (Joan, Robert or Nia) used ethical methods? Give examples from Chapter 4 or 5. Label your examples with the names given in Cha 4 & 5.

RR10. Madison, 2005, p. 147 #2. How would specific ethical dilemmas change from one case study to the next? How would Joan's concern to sensationalize her consultants also be a factor for Robert? How would Nia's concern for public policy be a concern for Robert and Joan? How would the effects be discretely different in each project?

RR11. How can art and art-based research be used to address ethical concerns?

**Week 5 - Feb 17: Arts-Based Reading Presentation Group Work**

NO CLASS MEETING - Meet with Group to Prepare Arts-Based Research Presentation  
READ/WATCH your Art-Based Research Method provided on WebCT Learning Module.

- RR12. Turn in Art-Based Research Poster Presentation plan via discussion board posting.
- Outline of material to be covered
  - PPT - Print to go on poster board
  - Art Representations
  - Handout (APA style citations of resources, key concepts of materials, a critical review of the material, recommendations on how this material can inform educators and suggestions for how to use art-based research method)
  - Role Schedule: How you will cover shifts - who will do what and when?

**Week 6 - Feb 24: Social Justice Curriculum & Instruction**

OPTIONAL CLASS

Option to attend Christopher Greenslate's Social Justice in Teaching Presentation  
4-8 pm UH 443

**Week 7 - Mar 3 Ethnographic Data Collection, Coding, Initial Analysis Ethnographic Data Collection, Coding, Initial Analysis**

READ Madison, D. Soyini. (2005). *Critical Ethnography*, Chapter 7-9, p. 149-220.

Chapter 7: Performance, p. 149-180

Chapter 8: Writing, p. 181-200

Chapter 9: Case Studies, p. 201-220

RR13. In terms of Madison, 2005, Chapter 7: Performance (p.149-180), what is the value of understanding ethnography through a performance paradigm?

RR14. In terms of Madison, 2005, Chapter 8: Writing (pp. 181-200) how will you use TODD (time, organization, & deep discipline) in your writing plan and implementation (p. 185-191)?

Time: What time will you set aside each week? How will you build it into your routine and not let other things take priority? What strategies will you employ to say no to other things? (Choose the rocks over the jellybeans!)

Organization: How will you organize to make the best use of your time? What will your muse map look like (p. 183-185)? How will you use this weekly?

Deep Discipline: What is the inner purpose that motivates you to choose writing over other activities? What are you willing to sacrifice to accomplish your research and writing goals? (What jellybeans are you willing to discard?)

RR15. In terms of Madison, 2005, Chapter 9: Case Studies (pp.201-220), describe one of the researcher's (Joan, Robert or Nia) application of the performance paradigm?

DRAFT of Ethnography in Progress

### **Week 8 – March 10 Arts-Based Research Poster Presentations**

READ/WATCH Assigned Art-Based Readings and Art

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

COMPLETE feedback sheets in each presentation.

### **Week 9 - Mar 17 Ethnographic Observation**

Now that you learned about other Art-Based Research Methodologies.

READ 2 items from the other Art-Based Research Methods Learning Modules of your choice.

RR16. Which art-based research methods could help you answer your research questions and how?

RR17. Which art-based research methods could help you disseminate your research findings and how?

### **Week 10 - Mar 24 Ethnographic Observation Workshop & Art-Based Research**

READ Knowles, J. Gary & Promislow, Sara. (2008). Using an Arts Methodology to Create a Thesis or Dissertation, In J. Gary Knowles & Ardra L. Coles Handbook of Arts in Qualitative Research, NY: SAGE Publication, p.511-525.

CHECK OUT the A/r/tography Website:

<http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/Artography/index.php>

RR18. In what ways can you include art in your work and research? What strategies would you use?

### **Week 11 - Mar 31: SPRING BREAK**

NO CLASS – NO READINGS

### **Week 12 – Friday - April 10 Social Justice & Equity Symposium**

NO READINGS

No class on Tuesday April 7th- INSTEAD ATTEND symposium

SIGN UP for 1 graduate level credit.

RR 19: Symposium Assignment; Write 6-10 page paper on how the symposium informs your work. More details will be provided in class as well as in the Symposium Course Instructions.

**Week 13 - April 14 AERA**  
NO OFFICIAL CLASS MEETING

ATTEND American Educational Research Association Conference (AERA) Instead of Class  
San Diego Convention Center, April 13-17 8 am – 5 pm

READ AERA Paper Reading Of Your Choice.

RR20. AERA Paper Response

Either

- attend a session at American Educational Research Association (AERA)

OR

- contact a presenter (via email) and ask for a copy of their paper related to your research.

WRITE a 1-3 page paper on how this paper informs your work.

Your 1-3 page paper response shall addressing the following:

- 20 a. What is compelling about their paper?
- 20 b. How does it apply to your teaching or research?
- 20 c. What could others learn from this paper?
- 20 d. How can you use this in your work?

POST your paper response and AERA paper (if possible) on the WebCT Discussion Board.

**Week 14 - April 21 Presentations**

NO READINGS

Ethnography in Progress Due

**Week 15 – April 28 Review & Closure**

NO READINGS

Course Evaluations, Feedback to Peers, Develop Next Steps

## **Assignments**

See assignment descriptions, instructions, graphic organizers and rubrics on WebCT.

### **Reading Responses, 20 points**

As part of the weekly readings you will be required to complete a reading response. The reading response prompt is **designed to help you focus your reading** and to prepare you for participation in class activities. Reading responses **will only be accepted the date that it is due. If you are absent and want to earn credit for the reading response you must email the readings response to the instructor before the start of class.** Each reading response is worth 1 point, 1% of the course grade. There will be 20 different reading responses for the semester totaling 20 points, 20% of the course grade.

### **Art-Based Research Poster Presentation, 20 points**

Class teams will jigsaw a set of materials on Art-Based Research: *Textual Art, Fiction, 2-D & 3-D Art, Photo Essays, Acting & Video Documentary*. Each team will provide a poster presentation on their art-based research method. The presentation will include a representation of the reading and art, highlighting the key methodological concepts and how this methodology can inform ethnographic research and culturally relevant pedagogy.

Each group will provide a poster presentation with a handout (APA Style citations of resources, a critical review of the material, key concepts of methodology, recommendations on how this material can inform educators and suggestions for how to use art-based research method), a representation of the art (i.e. photo, performance, ppt, video, art, graphic organizer...), a reflection from each group member, and a self assessed rubric from each group member. The presentation is worth 20 points (*poster, presentation, handout and group reflection/self-assessment equal 5 points each*).

### **Ethnographic Observation, 20 points**

Go with a partner or small group to one of the following places in your school community: Library, Laundry Mat, or Local Recreation Center. Spend a **minimum of an hour** in the space collecting ethnographic data.

Take notes on the space, the people using the space and the interactions of those in the social setting. Write up the notes and share with your team. Bring the data collected to the following class for group analysis. Once we collect the data we will analyze the data and create art with the materials in an effort to disseminate the research findings.

Each group will complete handwritten field notes, typed up field notes, memos, coding analysis, discussion of findings, an art form representing your findings. and a self-assessed rubric. This observation is worth 20 points.

### **Ethnography in Progress, 40 points**

You will *choose an ethnographic study to begin and provide evidence* of how you are collecting data, analyzing the data and preparing the dissemination of your findings. You will be required to *incorporate one of the art-based research methods* in your data collection, analysis and/or dissemination process. This assignment is worth 40 points.

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION SYLLABUS INFORMATION

### College of Education Attendance Policy

Due to the dynamic and interactive nature of courses in the College of Education, all students are expected to attend all classes and participate actively. At a minimum, students must attend more than 80% of class time, or s/he may not receive a passing grade for the course at the discretion of the instructor. Individual instructors may adopt more stringent attendance requirements. Should the student have extenuating circumstances, s/he should contact the instructor as soon as possible. (Adopted by the COE Governance Community, December, 1997).

### Instructor Application of the Policy

For this course attendance at all classes is essential to receiving credit for intermediate assessments and involvement in discussions of readings. A minimum grade of C+ is required in this course to qualify as part of the credential requirement. Absences and late arrivals/early departures will affect the final grade. **If more than three hours is missed, the highest possible grade that can be earned is a "C+"**. If extenuating circumstances occur, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements.

In addition to these requirements, students will lose 3 points for every hour or portion of an hour that they are absent. Students may attend optional classes or read one of the extra texts to make up for their absences.

Please note Week 12 & 13 have additional attendance requirements:

Social Justice & Equity Symposium – April 10

and

American Educational Research Association Annual Conference in San Diego April 13-17.

The following individual penalties will be assessed for absences:

- **Half credit for any late assignments** turned in within one week of the original due date.
- **No assignments will be accepted after one week.**
- **No credit** for the intermediate assessment for that absent day work (reading responses, role-plays, presentations...)
- **3 points will be deducted for each hour absence or portion of an hour absence; this includes tardiness and early departures.**
- **1 make up assignment** will be accepted for a three-hour (or portion of 3 hours) absence. The maximum points that can be made up is 9 points, 3 points for each of the three hours. Make up assignments are due within one week of absence.
- The extra credit assignment is available for students that have not missed any class sessions and the extra credit assignment is due the second to last class session (**Session 14**). **Nine (9) points are the maximum points** that can be earned for extra credit.

### Students with Disabilities Requiring Reasonable Accommodations

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations must be approved for services by providing appropriate and recent documentation to the Office of Disable Student Services (DSS). This office is located in Craven Hall 5205, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905, or TTY (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive reasonable accommodations should meet with their instructor during office hours or, in order to ensure confidentiality, in a more private setting.



## **All University Writing Requirement**

This course requires you to write 2500 words for your reading responses, ethnographic observation and ethnography in progress.

## **CSUSM Academic Honesty Policy**

"Students will be expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty and integrity, as outlined in the Student Academic Honesty Policy. All written work and oral presentation assignments must be original work. All ideas/materials that are borrowed from other sources must have appropriate references to the original sources. Any quoted material should give credit to the source and be punctuated with quotation marks.

Students are responsible for honest completion of their work including examinations. There will be no tolerance for infractions. If you believe there has been an infraction by someone in the class, please bring it to the instructor's attention. The instructor reserves the right to discipline any student for academic dishonesty in accordance with the general rules and regulations of the university. Disciplinary action may include the lowering of grades and/or the assignment of a failing grade for an exam, assignment, or the class as a whole."

Incidents of Academic Dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students. Sanctions at the University level may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

## **Plagiarism**

As an educator, it is expected that each student will do his/her own work, and contribute equally to group projects and processes. Plagiarism or cheating is unacceptable under any circumstances. If you are in doubt about whether your work is paraphrased or plagiarized see the Plagiarism Prevention for Students website <http://library.csusm.edu/plagiarism/index.html>. If there are questions about academic honesty, please consult the University catalog.

## **Use of Technology**

Students are expected to demonstrate competency in the use of various forms of technology (i.e. word processing, electronic mail, WebCT6, use of the Internet, and/or multimedia presentations). Specific requirements for course assignments with regard to technology are at the discretion of the instructor. Keep a digital copy of all assignments for use in your teaching portfolio. All assignments will be submitted online, and some will be submitted in hard copy as well. Details will be given in class.

## **Electronic Communication Protocol**

Electronic correspondence is a part of your professional interactions. If you need to contact the instructor, e-mail is often the easiest way to do so. It is my intention to respond to all received e-mails in a timely manner. Please be reminded that e-mail and on-line discussions are a very specific form of communication, with their own nuances and etiquette. For instance, electronic messages sent in all upper case (or lower case) letters, major typos, or slang, often communicate more than the sender originally intended. With that said, please be mindful of all e-mail and on-line discussion messages you send to your colleagues, to faculty members in the College of Education, or to persons within the greater educational community. All electronic messages should be crafted with professionalism and care.

Things to consider:

- Would I say in person what this electronic message specifically says?
- How could this message be misconstrued?
- Does this message represent my highest self?
- Am I sending this electronic message to avoid a face-to-face conversation?

In addition, if there is ever a concern with an electronic message sent to you, please talk with the author in person in order to correct any confusion.

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Read the syllabus: It is a contract between you and the instructor.

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