

Department of Gender Studies
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Queen's University

Course: GNDS 940.03 Independent Doctoral Research

Title: **Institutional Ethnographic Research Methodology: Mapping the Social**

Term: Summer 2020

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Institutional ethnography (IE) is a powerful method of inquiry and analysis for marginalized people in our society. It was developed by feminist sociologist, Dorothy E. Smith, Professor Emerita at OISE/UT. Contrary to its name, IE does not focus on institutions; it analyses how institutional processes frame people's relations and interactions with one another (what Smith calls ruling relations). IE begins with people's everyday experiences, and provides a way of exploring how ruling relations shape their experiences and practices. It explicates the interlocking relations, social in nature, across institutional sites that lead to certain outcomes. One way of thinking about IE is that instead of studying marginalized people such as the homeless by making them your subjects, IE researchers stand beside these people and help them to understand the processes that produce the conditions of their lives. Through this understanding, IE researchers may work with marginalized groups to strategize for change.

As a method of inquiry, IE has gained international attention, especially amongst activists and academics oriented toward social change and social justice. The method utilizes a variety of research tools, including interviews, statistics, textual analysis, and analysis of other textual representations (e.g. maps and photographs etc.). It is used in disciplines such as education, social work, human and health sciences, sociology and feminist studies.

This course teaches institutional ethnography (IE) as a method of inquiry and social analysis. It is at once theoretical, methodological and practical. It examines the epistemology and theoretical traditions that inform IE, discusses IE's core concepts and procedures, and provides opportunities for practice. We will discuss and practice the research tools utilized by IE, including interviews, textual analysis and other textual representations. The precise contents for this independent study will focus on social work and the various intersecting organizations that contribute to the social organization of the work of social workers and their clients. Our discussion will also focus on how to generate research questions, discuss common problems in the research process, and develop solutions. This work will be most helpful in the process of formulating your research topic.

ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT

The course is both content and skill oriented, and is organized as a doctoral research seminar. This means that you will read the materials with an eye to seeing how they may help us to understand the problems and issues you want to explore. Readings will be assigned each week, and you will be responsible for summarizing and discussing the readings. Discussions will be around how to investigate institutional relations, problems arising from this kind of exploration, and how to use the readings as the basis for your own work.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You are required to keep a reading journal. The entries will consist of

- (a) a precis or summary of the article or chapter (this should be 1-2 paragraphs highlighting the main argument and salient points, and the evidential basis of the author's claim);
- (b) your understanding of and questions about the reading: What are the core concepts and terms? What don't you understand or what do you have problems with?; and
- (c) how the reading informs your own work: What are the key insights? How do they apply to what you are exploring?

For the readings that report on research findings (rather than those outlining the principles of IE), please look carefully at how the authors design their studies and analyse their data. Your comments and questions in the journal will form the basis for our discussions.

The reading journal is worth 50 percent of your total grade. It will be evaluated in terms of your comprehension, and the extent to which you learn to apply IE to your own work. The journal is due at the end of the term in August, however, you may hand in journal entries as often as you wish for feedback and to use during our discussions.

The other 50 percent of your grade will be based on a term paper. The paper could be the basis for your thesis proposal, or a discussion on how you envision applying IE to your research. Whatever you choose to do, it must be an attempt at formulating an institutional ethnography. The paper is due at the end of August.

Summary of requirements

Reading Journal 50%

Term Paper 50%

REQUIRED TEXTS

Campbell, Marie & Frances Gregor (2002). *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography*. Toronto: Garamond Press.

Smith, Dorothy E. (1999). *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Smith, Dorothy E. (2005). *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Smith, Dorothy E. (Ed.) (2006). *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

OPTIONAL TEXTS

Campbell, Marie & Ann Manicom (Eds.) (1995). *Knowledge, Experience, and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
[This book is out of print and may only be available in the library. I can lend you my copy if we can't get a copy from a library]

deVault, Marjorie (Ed.) (2008). *People at Work: Life, Power, and Social Inclusion in the New Economy*. New York & London: New York University Press.

Frampton, Caelie, Gary Kinsman, A.K. Thompson & Kate Tilleczek (Eds.) (2006) *Sociology for Changing the World: Social Movements/Social Research*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing. [Available online]

Stanley, Liz. (2018). *Dorothy E. Smith, Feminist Sociology and Institutional Ethnography: A Short Introduction*. Edinburgh: X Press

READINGS

I'd like you to use these books as resources, not only for the course, but for your research beyond the course. So you will not be reading these texts simply to satisfy the course requirement. I expect that you will be referring to them over and over as you conduct your own research and analyse the data from your research.

Some of the readings, for example Campbell & Gregor (2002) and Smith (2005), are the theoretical and methodological basis for doing IE. Some of them are examples of doing IE. For the purpose of the course, I have tried to intersperse them in relation to how I see the course and your progress, but this organization may not work for your particular undertaking. As such, I encourage you to read ahead, if you think a chapter or an article may shed light on your research, or to refer back to something we have read earlier in the course.

I'd like you to bear in mind, all the time, that you are reading the texts in terms of (a) how to do IE research and how it is different from conventional social research, and (b) how a particular piece may inform your own work. You should take good notes on the readings, marking sections and passages that you will likely return to when you conduct your own research and analysis (you may wish to record quotes in your journal with page number for easy tracking in the future). While initially this undertaking can be a pain in the neck, in the long term you will see its benefits. Meanwhile, enjoy the readings. I certainly do!

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1: Introduction

Marie Campbell (2006) *Research for activism: Understanding social organization from inside it*. In Caelie Frampton, Gary Kinsman, A.K. Thompson & Kate Tilleczek (Eds.) *Sociology for Changing the World: Social Movements/Social Research*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, p. 87-96.

Roxana Ng (2006) *Exploring the globalized regime of ruling from the standpoint of immigrant workers*. In Caelie Frampton, Gary Kinsman, A.K. Thompson & Kate Tilleczek (Eds.) *Sociology for Changing the World: Social Movements/Social Research*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, p. 174-188.

Week 2: Making the Ontological Shift I

Marie Campbell & Frances Gregor (2002) *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography*. Toronto: Garamond Press, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2.

Dorothy E. Smith (2005) *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Introduction, Chapter 1.

Week 3: Launching into IE: Beginning in the Everyday/Everynight World

Campbell & Gregor (2002) Chapter 3.

D.E. Smith (2005), Chapter 2.

George Smith, Eric Mykhalovskij & Douglas Weatherbee (2006) A research proposal. In Dorothy E. Smith (Ed.) *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Chapter 9.

Week 4: Making the ontological shift, II & Key Terms

D.E. Smith (2005), Glossary, p. 223-229.

Glossary in Caelie Frampton et al. (2006), p. 27-38.

Bisaillon, Laura. 2012. An Analytic Glossary to Social Inquiry Using Institutional and Political Activist Ethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 11(5) pp. 607-627.

Week 5: Self-study – Choose 2-3 IE Studies From the Following Collections

Marie Campbell & Ann Manicom (Eds.) (1995), *Knowledge, Experience, and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Marjorie deVault (Ed.) (2008) *People at Work: Life, Power, and Social Inclusion in the New Economy*. New York & London: New York University Press. [Relevant chapters: 2, 11, 12,13]

Griffith, Alison & Dorothy E. Smith (Eds.) (2014). *Under New Public Management: Institutional Ethnographies of Changing Front-Line Work*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. [Relevant Chapters introduction, 6, 7, 8 & conclusion]

Week 6: Report Back from Self-Study

Week 7: Making the Ontological Shift III: Language &text as coordinators of social relations

D.E. Smith (2005), Chapters 3, 4, 5, 9.

Week 8: Data collection for an IE

Campbell & Gregor, 2002, Chapter 4 & 5

Week 9: Doing IE: Analyzing Experience

D.E. Smith (2005), Chapters 6 & 7.

Timothy Diamond (2006) "Where did you get the fur coat, Fern?" Participant observation in IE. In D.E. Smith, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*, Chapter 3.

Marie Campbell (2006) Institutional ethnography and experience as data. In D.E. Smith, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*, Chapter 5.

Week 10: Doing IE: Analyzing Text and Discourse

D.E. Smith (2005), Chapter 8.

D.E. Smith (2006) Incorporating texts into ethnographic practice. In D.E. Smith, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*, Chapter 4.

Alison Griffith (2006) Constructing single parent families for schooling: Discovering an institutional discourse. In D.E. Smith, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*, Chapter 7.

Susan Marie Turner (2006) Mapping institutions as work and texts. In D.E. Smith, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*, Chapter 8.

Lauren Eastwood (2006) Making the institution ethnographically accessible: UN document production and the transformation of experience. In D.E. Smith, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*, Chapter 10.

Roxana Ng (1995) Multiculturalism as ideology: A textual analysis. In Marie Campbell & Ann Manicom (Eds.), *Knowledge, Experience, and Ruling Relations: Studies in the Social Organization of Knowledge*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p. 35-48.

Week 11: Doing IE: Analyzing Interviews

Marjorie deVault & Liza McCoy (2006) Institutional ethnography: Using interviews to investigate ruling relations. In D.E. Smith, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*, Chapter 2.

Liza McCoy (2006) keeping the institution in view: Working with interview accounts of everyday experience. In D.E. Smith, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*, Chapter 6. Roxana Ng &

Kiran Mirchandani (2008) Linking global trends and local lives: Mapping the methodological dilemmas. In Kathleen Gallagher (Ed.), *The Methodological Dilemma: Creative, Critical and Collaborative Approaches to Qualitative Research*. New York: Routledge, Chapter 2.

Week 12: Putting it together

D.E. Smith (2005), Part 4.

Campbell & Gregor (2002) Chapter 6.