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Feminist and Queer Ethnography

Contact Hours

Friday 11:30 am - 2:20 pm

Course Instructor

See SOLUS

Course Description

Ethnography is an interdisciplinary method for the study of everyday life. Ethnographic research and writing create knowledge about personal and collective experiences of culture and society. Gender studies scholars practice ethnography to create critically intersectional feminist/queer/trans knowledge.

This seminar introduces feminist and queer ethnography as two established modes of scholarly inquiry, bodies of critical theory, genres of writing, and methods for ethical research. We examine their histories by reading scholars in gender studies and interdisciplinary fields (Black, Indigenous, critical ethnic, and postcolonial studies) who take up, critique, and transform ethnographic research and writing as their methods for producing liberative knowledge.

All students will receive introductory instruction in the core methods and ethics of ethnographic research and will learn how to closely read ethnographic monographs for their content, form, and craft.

Students may choose one of two options for the final project: (a) comparative analysis of two ethnographic monographs, or (b) an original ethnographic research activity – participant observation, or an ethnographic interview – that will be interpreted within an ethnographic essay.

Required Course Materials

Feminist Ethnography: Thinking Through Methodologies, Challenges, and Possibilities, 2nd edition, Dana-Ain Davis and Christa Craven, Eds. (2016)

Unsettling Queer Anthropology, Margot Weiss, Ed. (2024)

The Politics of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture in the Afro-Surinamese Diaspora, Gloria Wekker (2006)

Articles assigned on Course Reserves

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- characterize ethnography its histories, methods, ethics, applications, and effects – using the lens of critically feminist, queer and trans analyses
- understand ethnography as a research method, an area of intellectual inquiry, a body of critical theory, a mode of writing, and a model of ethical interrelationship
- understand the importance of these qualities of ethnography to theories and debates in gender studies
- understand the complexities of ethical research and writing about people and interpersonal relationships
- gain and practice skills in close, critical reading of an ethnographic monograph and other ethnographic texts
- develop and practice skills in advanced undergraduate or entry-level graduate analytical writing (short-form and long-form)
- optionally, develop and practice skills in independent ethnographic research, through the preparation, investigation, and writing of an ethnographic research activity

Course Evaluation			
25%			
25%			
10%			
10%			
30%			

Topics in Course Outline

UNIT 1 – Introducing Feminist and Queer Ethnography: History, Theory, Methods

UNIT 2 – Examining Ethnography

- Reading the Ethnographic Monograph
- Beyond "Insider" or "Outsider" Research
- Feminist and Queer Activist Ethnography
- Writing Feminist and Queer Ethnography
- Research and Book Presentations