

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY**

**ANTH 3005  
FALL 2025  
ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH METHODS**

**Instructor: Bernhard Leistle**

**Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2 – 4 p.m., or by appointment**

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**Pre-requisites: ANTH 2001**

**Method of Delivery: In-person**

**Time: Thursdays, 11:35 a.m. – 2:25 p.m.**

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**Course Description and Objectives:** In this course, students learn how anthropologists use an array of social scientific methods to collect and, to a degree, produce the materials on which they base their descriptions and interpretations of what they call “culture” and “society”. Students will be introduced to methods in sampling, observation, participation, interviewing, as well as documentation and analysis. While the emphasis is placed on practical instructions in form of hands-on workshops in class, and research exercises outside of it, methods will also be critically reflected in terms of their epistemological, political, and ethical dimensions.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students in this class will

- 1) become acquainted with a variety of ethnographic research methods;
- 2) learn how to practically apply these methods in experimental and real-life settings;
- 3) learn how to critically reflect on the constructive power of methods in anthropology and other social sciences;
- 4) become acquainted with current developments in contemporary anthropological methodology like multimodality or Indigenous methodologies

**Reading(s)/Textbook(s):**

The textbook for this course is

Bernard, Russell 2018 *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

An online version of the book is available through ARES in Brightspace. There are some access limitations for user; please consult the document “Ways to get the textbook” on Brightspace for more detailed information.

The book is also available on amazon and at other booksellers for CAD 128 (price on amazon), but the purchase is not necessary.

**All other readings** for the course will be accessible through ARES, or via link on Brightspace.

**Course Requirements & Methods of Evaluation:**

Evaluation in the course will be based on the following assignments/activities:

**Attendance and Participation: 20% - throughout the term.**

There will be a number of in-class activities, both individual and in groups, in this course.

Consistent attendance and engaged participation are required for full marks. Students might also be asked to make contributions to discussion fora on Brightspace.

**Observation-Exercise: 20% - due Oct. 16**

You will be asked to perform a methodical anthropological observation of a public space according to the principles discussed in class. The setting has to be “real-life”, that is you must be bodily present at the scene, but it must allow you to observe unobtrusively (that is, the space must be generally accessible, not access restricted). E.g. a public practice of a sports team is eligible, a gym restricted to members is not. Using public transport or sitting in a coffee-shop are also good options. You will observe your surroundings and what goes on in them for a minimum of one hour, taking note of everything you find noteworthy, if possible, by writing it down immediately, or after you have left the scene, from memory. Then you will write an anthropological interpretation of **800 to 1000 words** of your observations, based on criteria discussed in class. More information on this assignment will be provided on Brightspace.

**Two Take-Home Exercises: 20% (10% each)**

-the first on the topic of ethics, disclosed in class on Sept. 25, and due on Oct. 02;

-the second on the topic of coding and analysis, disclosed in class on Nov. 13, and due on Nov. 20. Detailed instructions will be provided on Brightspace.

**Interview-Project: 40% - Due December 20**

For your main project in this course, you will conduct a semi-structured, open-ended interview with one person on an anthropological topic. After obtaining their informed consent to do so, you will conduct the interview and record if permission is granted. You will code the interview for ethnographic themes and perform a content analysis based on the result of the coding. Then you will produce an ethnographic interpretation and write-up of your analysis, using anthropological concepts. Your interview is supposed to be at least 30 and maximally 60 min long, your ethnographic presentation between 1000 and 1500 words. More information on the project will be made available on Brightspace.

### **Submission, Late Policy and Extensions**

All assignments are to be handed in on Brightspace.

There is a deduction of 2% per day for late submission, including weekend. If you need academic accommodation due to a short-term illness or other emergency, please fill out the university's self-declaration form as documentation and send it to me no later than one day before the deadline of the assignment.

### **Statement on AI: Just Don't Do it.**

*(This is meant for those students who are tempted to, or used to, sometimes out of necessity because of conflicting demands on their time and energy, to rely on these new tools which have a profound effect on teaching and learning in university. It is not meant to put everyone, or really anyone, under suspicion, only to recognize the reality of the situation and the moment we find ourselves in)*

**Use of Chat GPT and other artificial intelligence tools is forbidden in this course.** While I fully acknowledge that there are mechanical and craft-like aspects to academic work, I also strongly believe that creativity and inventiveness are embodied and personal faculties. This becomes especially poignant in disciplines like anthropology which is supposed to approximate an understanding of lived realities of human beings. Within anthropology, it is perhaps courses on methods and methodology where the craft-like and the personal are brought into closest proximity and possible opposition.

As you may know, there are few “smoking gun” proofs that someone has used AI (although there are some) and it is always possible that a person actually managed to write this trite, lifeless, mechanical sentence or passage or text. But even if it might not be possible to prove in the particular instance, I can guarantee you that, within this course, AI will not be able to create work that achieves good or even passable evaluations. This is because assignments for the course will be tailored to its contents; they will ask you to demonstrate not so much a knowledge of information, but your engagement with and learning in this particular course. In exchange, the assignments will be manageable and, hopefully, interesting. If you have questions, don't hesitate to ask me, or talk to your classmates about their interpretation of a task or assignment. **As for AI, just don't use it;** it might seem like “more work” but you might be surprised at the sense of gratification and accomplishment that actually learning something can bring.

### **Class conduct and land acknowledgment**

In this course, you are expected to learn from your texts, your teacher and from one another. This requires striving towards understanding each other but it does not imply striving towards finding agreement. Our class will be racially, religiously, politically, culturally, generationally, and economically diverse. We will be of different gender identifications and sexual orientations and our lived experiences and reactions to the course material will reflect this diversity. Sharing our perspectives and interpretations on the course material will enhance everyone's learning experience and you are encouraged to openly express any disagreements with the authors you will read, with your fellow classmates, or with the Professor in the different participation fora that are available for this course. However, you are expected to conduct yourself in such a way that shows the utmost respect to others who may – or may not – share your views. Derogatory comments and hateful behavior towards others (and their views) will not be tolerated.

Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin nation. In doing so, Carleton acknowledges it has a responsibility to the Algonquin people and a responsibility to adhere to Algonquin cultural protocols.

### **Additional Information**

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar Regulations, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F= Below 50	WDN = Withdrawn from the course	DEF = Deferred	

### **Academic Regulations, Accommodations, Plagiarism, Etc.**

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here:

<https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/>

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (<https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline/>). For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

#### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at **613-520-6608** or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*).

\*The deadline for contacting the Paul Menton Centre regarding accommodation for October/November examinations is **October 1, 2025** and **November 15, 2025** for December examinations.

#### **For Religious Obligations:**

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

### **For Pregnancy:**

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

### **For Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [www.carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](http://www.carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as your own and is a serious academic offence. For the details of what constitutes plagiarism, the potential penalties and the procedures refer to the section on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy (See <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>). The Policy is strictly enforced and is binding on all students. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Students who infringe the Policy may be subject to one of several penalties.

### **What are the Penalties for Plagiarism?**

A student found to have plagiarized an assignment may be subject to one of several penalties including but not limited to: a grade of zero, a failure or a reduced grade for the piece of academic work; reduction of final grade in the course; completion of a remediation process; resubmission of academic work; withdrawal from course(s); suspension from a program of study; a letter of reprimand.

## What are the Procedures?

All allegations of plagiarism are reported to the faculty of Dean of FASS and Management. Documentation is prepared by instructors and departmental chairs. The Dean writes to the student and the University Ombudsperson about the alleged plagiarism. The Dean reviews the allegation. If it is not resolved at this level then it is referred to a tribunal appointed by the Senate.

## Assistance for Students:

“As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>”

Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>

Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>

Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Equity & Inclusive Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Career Services: <https://carleton.ca/career/>

## Important Information:

- Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).
- Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted.
- Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.
- Carleton University is committed to protecting the privacy of those who study or work here (currently and formerly). To that end, Carleton's Privacy Office seeks to encourage the implementation of the privacy provisions of Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) within the university.
- In accordance with FIPPA, please ensure all communication with staff/faculty is via your Carleton email account. To get your Carleton Email you will need to activate your [MyCarletonOne account](#) through Carleton Central. Once you have activated your MyCarletonOne account, log into the [MyCarleton Portal](#).

- Please note that you will be able to link your MyCarletonOne account to other non-MyCarletonOne accounts and receive emails from us. However, for us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid MyCarletonOne address. Therefore, it would be easier to respond to your inquiries if you would send all email from your connect account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you may wish to do so by visiting <https://students.carleton.ca/>.

### **FALL TERM 2025 – Important Dates and Deadlines**

Date	Activity
August 27, 2025	Deadline for course outlines to be made available to students registered in full fall, early fall, and fall/winter courses.
August 31, 2025	Last day for receipt of applications from potential fall (November) graduates.
September 1, 2025	Statutory holiday. University closed.
September 2, 2025	Academic orientation (undergraduate and graduate students).
	Orientation for new Teaching Assistants.
	All new students are expected to be on campus. Class and laboratory preparations, departmental introductions for students, and other academic preparation activities will be held.
September 3, 2025	Fall term begins. Full fall, early fall, and fall/winter classes begin.
September 9, 2025	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) in early fall courses.
September 16, 2025	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) in full fall, late fall, and fall/winter courses.
	Last day to withdraw from early fall courses with a full fee adjustment.

Date	Activity
	Graduate students who have not electronically submitted their final thesis copy to Graduate Studies will not be eligible to graduate in fall 2025 and must register for the fall 2025 term.
September 19-21, 2025	Full summer and late summer term deferred final examinations will be held.
September 30, 2025	Last day to withdraw from full fall and fall/winter courses with a full fee adjustment.
October 1, 2025	Last day for academic withdrawal from early fall courses.
	Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for Oct/Nov final examinations from the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Note that it may not be possible to fulfil accommodation requests received after the specified deadlines.
October 9, 2025	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in early fall term undergraduate courses, before the official Oct/Nov final examination period (see examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
October 10, 2025	December examination schedule (fall term final and fall/winter mid-terms) available online.
October 13, 2025	Statutory holiday. University closed.
October 15, 2025	Last day for receipt of applications for admission to an undergraduate degree program for the winter term from applicants whose documents originate from outside Canada or the United States.
October 16, 2025	Last day of early fall classes.
	Last day for final take-home examinations to be assigned in early fall courses, with the exception of those conforming to the examination

Date	Activity
	regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
	Last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for early fall courses.
October 20, 2025	Deadline for course outlines to be made available to students registered in late fall courses.
October 20-24, 2025	Fall break, no classes.
October 25-26, November 1-2, 2025	Final examinations in early fall undergraduate courses will be held.
October 27, 2025	Late fall classes begin.
November 7, 2025	Last day to withdraw from late fall term courses with a full fee adjustment.
November 14-16, 2025	Early fall undergraduate deferred final examinations will be held.
November 15, 2025	Last day for academic withdrawal from full fall and late fall courses.
	Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for December full fall and late fall examinations and fall/winter midterm examinations from the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Note that it may not be possible to fulfil accommodation requests received after the specified deadlines.
	Last day for receipt of applications for admission to an undergraduate degree program for the winter term.
November 21, 2025	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in full fall term or fall/winter undergraduate courses, before the official December final

Date	Activity
	examination period (see examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
November 28, 2025	Last day for graduate students to submit their supervisor-approved thesis, in examinable form to the department.
	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in late fall term undergraduate courses, before the official final examination period (see examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
November 30, 2025	Last day for receipt of applications from potential winter (February) graduates.
December 5, 2025	Fall term ends.
	Last day of full fall and late fall classes.
	Classes follow a Monday schedule.
	Last day for final take-home examinations to be assigned, with the exception of those conforming to the examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
	Last day that can be specified by an instructor as a due date for term work for full and late fall courses.
	Last day for receipt of applications for undergraduate degree program transfers for winter term.
December 6-7, 2025	No classes or examinations take place.

Date	Activity
December 8-20, 2025	Final examinations in full fall and late fall courses and mid-term examinations in fall/winter courses will be held. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
December 20, 2025	All final take-home examinations are due on this day, with the exception of those conforming to the examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
December 24, 2025 at noon through January 2, 2026 inclusive	University closed.

## **Class Schedule, ANTH 3005 Ethnographic Research Methods, Fall 2025**

### **Part I: Preparation**

#### **Class 1, September 04, Introduction**

No readings

#### **Class 2, September 11: Ethnographic Research and Fieldwork**

Readings: Sluka, Jeffrey A., Robben, Antonius C.G.M. 2012. "Fieldwork in Cultural Anthropology: An Introduction". In: *Ethnographic Fieldwork. An Anthropological Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Malden: Blackwell, 1 - 47  
 Recommended: Bernard, Chapter 1: Anthropology and the Social Sciences

#### **Class 3, September 18: Preparing for Research**

Reading: Bernard, Chapter 3: Preparing for Research, pp. 54-76 (\*pp. 76 onward, on 'the literature search' may be a useful reference for library research, but is not required reading)

Recommended: Eco, Umberto 2015 [1977], "An Experiment in the Library of Alessandria" In: *How to Write a Thesis*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 87 - 109

#### **Class 4, September 25: Ethics – formal and informal**

Readings: Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association (AAA), 2009 version  
<https://americananthro.org/wp-content/uploads/AAA-Ethics-Code-2009-1.pdf>

Carleton ethics application, CUREB Protocol Form  
<https://carleton.ca/researchethics/forms/>

McIntosh, Janet. 2004. "Maxwell's Demons: Disenchantment in the Field." *Anthropology and Humanism* 29 (1), 63 – 77

**Take Home Exercise: Ethics disclosed**

## **Part II Research Methods in Practice**

### **Week 5, October 2: Participant Observation**

Readings: Bernard, Chapter 12: Participant Observation

Spradley, James 1980. "Locating a Social Situation". In: *Participant Observation*. New York et al: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 39 - 52

**Ethics Exercise Due**

### **Week 6, October 9: Observation**

Reading: Bernard, Chapter 14: Direct and Indirect Observation

### **Week 7, October 16: Unstructured and Semi-Structured Interviews; Focus Groups**

Readings: Bernard, Chapter 7: Sampling III: Nonprobability Sampling and Choosing Informants

Bernard, Chapter 8: Interviewing I: Unstructured and Semi-Structured

**Observation assignment due**

**October 20 – 24, Fall Break, no classes**

### **Week 8, October 30: Structured Interviews**

Reading: Bernard, Chapter 9: Interviewing II: Questionnaires

### **Week 9, November 06: Documentation and Organization**

Readings: Bernard, Chapter 13: Field Notes and Database Management

### **Week 10, November 13: Coding and Grounded Theory**

Readings: Bernard, Chapter 19: Text Analysis II: Pp. 459-470 only (Coding & Grounded Theory)

Dwyer, Kevin 1982. *Moroccan Dialogues*, ch. 3 "The Circumcision", Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press

**Take Home Exercise: Coding disclosed**

## **Part III: Limits, Critiques and Paradigms**

### **Week 11, November 20: Texts, Multimodality, and Creative Methodologies**

Readings: Westmoreland, Mark 2022. "Multimodality: Reshaping Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 51, 173 - 194

Epp, Jared. 2023. "The Ethnographic B movie: Centering the uncertain, absurd and low quality in collaborative filmmaking." *DIY, Alternative Cultures & Society* (2)1: 75-93.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/27538702231221859>

Recommended: Bernhard, Chapter 18, Text Analysis I

**Coding Exercise Due**

**Week 12, November 27: Decolonization and Indigenous Methodologies**

Readings: Wilson, Shawn 2008. "Can a Ceremony Include a Literature Review?", Ch. 3 in: *Research is Ceremony*. Halifax/Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing

Smith, L. T. (2021). Chapter 10: Responding to the imperatives of an indigenous agenda: A case study of Māori. In *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (pp. 215-238). Zed Books.

**Week 13, December 04: Concluding Discussion**

No reading

**Interview-Project due Dec. 20**