

Introduction to Graduate Study in Folklore 2:

Fieldwork

English 770.02 (08805-7)

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Office Hours: 9:00-11:00 a.m Tuesdays, or by appointment

Quarter: Spring 2008

Meeting Time: M 12:30–3:18

Location: Dulles 308

Course Description:

This course will be run as a seminar/workshop that explores a range of methodological, theoretical, and ethical issues in fieldwork as practiced in folklore and allied fields of ethnographic research. The emphasis will fall on students applying perspectives, methods, and strategies from readings and discussion, in a series of exercises that offer students hands-on field experience. Class periods will alternate between discussion of readings and collectively reviewing and critiquing students' fieldwork documentation and written reflections.

Reading:

Issues in Collaboration and Representation, special issue of *The Journal of Folklore Research* (2000, 37: 2/3) will be available at SBX bookstore, 806 North High St. between 14th and 15th Ave

All other readings will be posted on [Carmen](#).

Expectations:

Attendance. The success of a small class depends on the regular attendance of all participants, so I expect you at every class session, barring significant illness or other personal emergencies.

Preparation and contribution. You must keep up with the readings and come prepared to discuss them. Participation in class discussion is expected and necessary; it ensures the best possible educational experience for all. Contributing is not necessarily about having the right answers. Discussion allows us to raise questions and critical concerns, try out new ideas and positions (even if we eventually abandon them), and help each other consider all sides of an issue.

Due dates. In the imposing words of Richard Bauman, "late work is a sure sign of indolence, shiftlessness, and moral turpitude." The due dates indicated are firm. Contact me ASAP, however, if you have compelling reasons to need an extension.

Grading:

25%

preparation for class, contribution to discussion and constructive critique

75%

fieldwork exercises, documentation, and reflections

Fieldwork Exercises:

You will receive more detailed instructions for each exercise. When an assignment is due, bring enough copies for each person to have one for in-class critique.

1. **Proxemics exercise (observing social uses of space), 3 page (or more) reflection (10%)**
2. **Document a “scene,” 4 page (or more) description, append a copy of your fieldnotes (15%)**
3. **First recorded interview, 4 page (or more) reflection on the interview process, audio index (10%)**
4. **Ethnopoetic transcription of interview section, 4 page (or more) reflection on transcription decisions (10%)**
5. **Second interview, 4 page (or more) reflection with reference to class readings, audio index (15%)**
6. **Photographic portfolio (10–20 images) evoking a sense of place, image index, 3 page reflection on the process (10%)**
7. **Document, describe, and analyze a performance or display event using whichever tools, techniques, and strategies from throughout quarter are relevant to the event under study. Write an 8–10 page report with reference to class readings. Append all fieldnotes and other supporting documentation such as photos, image indexes, and audio indexes. You will present your findings to the class during the last week. (30%)**

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Week One (3/24)

Introduction to the Course and the University District

- Bartis, Peter. 2002 [1979]. *Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman’s Introduction to Field Techniques*. Library of Congress Washington 2002. Available online <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/> or as PDF on Carmen.
- Follow links on Carmen to “about folklore” statements on the websites of the American Folklore Society and the OSU Center for Folklore Studies
<http://afsnet.org/aboutfolklore/aboutFL.cfm>.
[About Center for Folklore Studies](#)

- Oring, Elliott. 1986. "On the Concepts of Folklore" from *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction*. Logan: Utah State University Press.
- Dewalt, Kathleen M., Billie R. Dewalt with Coral B. Wayland. 1998. "Participant Observation." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Cashman, Ray. 2000. "Mumming with the Neighbors in West Tyrone." *Journal of Folklore Research* 37/1:73-84
- Crane, Julia and Michael Angrosino. 1984. "Proxemics." In *Field Projects in Anthropology*. New York: Waveland Press.

Week Two (3/31)

From Participant Observation to Documentation and Representation

Assignment #1 due

- Finnegan, Ruth. 1992. "Some prior issues and practicalities." In *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts*. New York: Routledge.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2001. "Participant Observation and Fieldnotes." In Paul Atkinson, et. al, eds. *Handbook of Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. Excerpts from *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Cashman, Ray. Excerpts from Irish fieldwork journal 1998-2007
- Cashman, Ray. [forthcoming]. "Preface." In *Storytelling on the Northern Irish Border: Characters and Community*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Cashman, Ray. Report on the Fort Wayne Macedonian Ball for Traditional Arts Indiana.

Week Three (4/7)

Interviewing, take one

Assignment #2 due

- Truesdell, Barbara. n.d. "Oral History Techniques: How to Organze and Conduct Oral History Interviews at <http://www.indiana.edu/~cshm/techniques.html>
- • Angrosino, Michael. 2006. "Conducting a Life History Interview." In *Doing Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Waveland.
- Cashman, Ray. Audio index, Patrick James McGrath, Co. Donegal, 8/15/07.
- Cashman, Ray. Documentation of Dita Atzeff interview for Traditional Arts Indiana

Week Four (4/14)

Interpreting Life Stories and Oral History

Assignment #3 due

- Tedlock, Dennis. 1992. "Ethnopoetics." In *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Alessandro Duranti. 1997. "Transcription: From Writing to Digitized Images," In *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Fine, Elizabeth. 1998. "Leading Prometheus Bound: Editing and Translating Oral Traditions." In *Teaching Oral Traditions*. New York: Modern Language Association.
- Stone, Ruth M. and Verlon L Stone. 1981. Event, Feedback, and Analysis: Research Media in the Study of Music Events. *Ethnomusicology* 25 (2): 215–225
- Jackson, Bruce. 1987. "Collecting." In *Fieldwork*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Week Five (4/21)

Interviewing, take two

Assignment #4 due

- Briggs, Charles L. 1986. "Introduction" and "Listen Before You Leap: Toward Methodological Sophistication." In *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Finnegan, Ruth. 1992. "Collecting, recording and creating texts." In *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts*. New York: Routledge.
- Anderson and Jack. 2006. "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses." In *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Stone, Ruth M. and Verlon L Stone. 1981. Event, Feedback, and Analysis: Research Media in the Study of Music Events. *Ethnomusicology* 25 (2): 215–225
- Jackson, Bruce. 1987. "Collecting." In *Fieldwork*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Week Six (4/28)

Photography and the Sense of Place

Assignment #5 due

- Collier, John Jr. and Malcolm Collier. Chapters 1, 4, 5, and 14 from *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Cresswell, Tim. 2004. "Defining Place." In *Place: A Short Introduction*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Cashman, Ray. [forthcoming] "Visions of Irish Nationalism." In *Journal of Folklore Research*.

Week Seven (5/5)

The Ethnography of Performance

Assignment #6 due

- Bauman, Richard. 1992. "Performance." In *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bauman, Richard and Donald Braid. 1998. "The Ethnography of Performance in the Study of Oral Traditions." In *Teaching Oral Traditions*. New York: Modern Language Association.
- Finnegan, Ruth. 1992. "Observing and analyzing performance." In *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts*. New York: Routledge.
- Cashman, Ray. [forthcoming]. "Ceilis as Storytelling Contexts." In *Storytelling on the Northern Irish Border: Characters and Community*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Week Eight (5/12)

Ethics and the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

- Statement of the American Folklore Society on Research with Human Subjects at <http://www.afsnet.org/aboutAFS/humansubjects.cfm>
- Look over the page at <http://orrrp.osu.edu/irb/training/citi.cfm> then click on www.citiprogram.org, take the course, and print out your certification (due week 10)
- Finnegan, Ruth. 1992. "Ethics." In *Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts*. New York: Routledge.
- Jackson, Bruce. 1987. "Being Fair." In *Fieldwork*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Noyes, Dorothy. "Paradigms of Engagement in US Government Policy: From the Office of Human Research Protections to Afghanistan" [unpublished paper]
- OSU IRB forms for Human Subjects Review

In *Research Ethics in Studies of Culture and Social Life*. Folklore Fellows Communications no. 292. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia Academia Scientiarum Fennica.

Week Nine (5/19)

Reflexive, Collaborative, and Reciprocal Ethnography

- "Issues in Collaboration and Representation," special issue of *The Journal of Folklore Research* (2000, 37: 2/3)
- Lawless, Elaine. 1992. "I Was Afraid Someone like You... an Outsider... Would Misunderstand": Negotiating Interpretive Differences between Ethnographers and Subjects. In *The Journal of American Folklore* 105/417.
- Borland, Katey. 2006. "'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research" In *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Week Ten (5/26)

In-class Presentations

Assignment #7 due by noon Monday, 6/1/08, in my mailbox in Denney 421.