

**ANT 391 Current Ethnography**

**Spring 2013**

**Dr. John Hartigan**

**Thursday 10:00-1:00**

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**Office Hours: Mon & Wed, 11am-12pm, & by appt. (SAC 4.158)**

**Seminar Overview:** Ethnography is a powerful method for analyzing cultural dynamics, objects, and settings. As a method that crosses disciplinary boundaries and is increasingly deployed by marketers, ethnography is continually being reinvented and applied in novel situations. This course combines a grounding in how to do ethnography with a survey of interesting ethnographic research today. The initial focus of the seminar will be understanding the components of fieldwork, both appraising and applying its distinctive elements (participant observation, interviewing, etc.). We will discern these through reading a range of articles and book-length works. As we build familiarity with the components of ethnography, we will consider the range of subjects to which it can be applied, with a particular attention to online/social network forums and multisited projects. This will involve thinking about a variety of theoretical questions by imagining and framing them in field settings. This seminar will, perforce, feature a multidisciplinary perspective. From this survey of a range of recent ethnographic works we will ascertain how this distinctive mode of generating social knowledge operates; as well, we will try to glimpse the future of fieldwork via a variety of current innovative approaches.

Our first concern will be to establish our respective interests and levels of familiarity with ethnography. In this regard, in our first session we will articulate some basic objectives and guidelines for these readings and our subsequent discussions. We will also establish some touchstones for reading and critically assessing ethnographies. Then we will proceed through these books, which are loosely clumped together thematically. *You are not expected to have any familiarity with these areas of research*—just a basic level of curiosity and increasingly honed sensibility for what makes a good ethnography. By the conclusion of this seminar, you should have both a clear understanding of developing trends in ethnographic research and a solid grasp on the way ethnographers combine theories, methods, and reflection into innovative analytical insights.

**Selected Books:**

*Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov*, Kirin Narayan.

*Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Methods*, Boellstorff et al.

*Reproducing Race: An Ethnography of Pregnancy as a Site of Racialization*, Khiara Bridges.

*Pigeon Trouble: Bestiary Biopolitics in a Deindustrialized America*, Hoon Song

*Guerilla Auditors: The Politics of Transparency in Neoliberal Paraguay*, Kregg Hetherington.

*Reigning the River: Urban Ecologies and Political Transformations in Kathmandu*, Anne Rademacher.

**Journal Resources:**

*American Ethnologist*

*Cultural Anthropology*

*Ethnography*

*Ethnos*

*Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*

*Qualitative Sociology*

**Weekly Topics:**

**Week 1 Jan. 17:** Introducing Ethnographic Research.

Readings: Chapters from

**Week 2 Jan. 24:** Field observations, round 1.

**Week 3 Jan 31:** Report on field observations; report on journal research.

**Week 4 Feb 7:** Selected journal readings and discussion.

**Week 5 Feb 14:** *Reproducing Race: An Ethnography of Pregnancy as a Site of Racialization*, Khiara Bridges.

**Week 6 Feb 21:** Race in Austin: field observations, round 2.

**Week 7 Feb 28:** *Pigeon Trouble: Bestiary Biopolitics in a Deindustrialized America*, Hoon Song

**Week 8 Mar 7:** Wild life in Austin: field observations, round 3.

**Mar 14:** Spring Break

**Week 9 Mar 21:** *Reigning the River: Urban Ecologies and Political Transformations in Kathmandu*, Anne Rademacher.

**Week 10 Mar 28:** Selected journal articles.

**Week 11 Apr 4:** *Guerilla Auditors: The Politics of Transparency in Neoliberal Paraguay*, Kregg Hetherington.

**Week 12 Apr 11:** Ethnographic perspectives on cultural forms; field observations, round 4.

**Week 13 Apr 18:** *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Methods*, Boellstorff et al.

**Week 14 Apr 25:** Ethnographic perspectives on virtual worlds; field observations, round 5.

**Week 15 May 2:** final projects.