POLS 5301/Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods, Spring 2017

Dr. Kathleen (Kathy) Staudt, Professor of Political Science, Benedict Hall 303, 747 7975 (kstaudt@utep.edu). Office Hours: Thursday, 4:30-6, MW 11-12; 3-4

This seminar is designed to prepare students with the rationale, knowledge, and skills to conduct ORIGINAL research through methods that involve interviews and questionnaire construction, observation through participation and immersion, case study, historical, and archival/discourse analysis. (The course does NOT cover analyses with other researchers’ or governmental data bases or the statistical techniques to analyze such data bases, addressed in other political science courses.) By original research, I mean the generation of new, heretofore uncollected content that contributes to the advancement of knowledge and action. Originality requires creativity, and openness to interdisciplinary perspectives to augment such creativity.

Assignments in this seminar are designed to prepare students in a workshop format to complete a draft thesis chapter that contains qualitative data or move toward a detailed thesis proposal, especially for qualitative or mixed methods research that focuses on the borderlands or other spatially distinctive areas where context matters. The seminar also emphasizes the ‘lived experience’ many border residents bring to research on our borderlands.

Books

Free! Doing Cultural Anthropology, Michael Angrosino, 2nd edition (pdf)

Free! Selections from Anthropology in Action, 16, 2-3 (e-journal on line, UTEP Library), also published as Toward Engaged Anthropology, edited by Sam Beck and Carl Maida (Berghahn, 2013).

Rather than assigning a previous text, Staudt will discuss topics from Margaret LeCompte and Jean Schensul, Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research (Alta Mira/Rowman & Littlefield, 2010)

Suggested, but not required or on UTEP Library reserve:

Randy Stoecker, Research Methods for Community Change (especially for action/evaluation research with nonprofit organizations)

Mark Lusk et al. Social Justice in the US-Mexico Border Region

Reference: Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods, (45 chapters!), on 3-hour UTEP Library reserve under TED 6308.

Ethnographic Toolkit, Volumes 2+ (1st edition), on reserve

Several qualitative research textbooks, on reserve and listed below. Students will read and present a book to the class, (power point required) of major definitions, ideas and applications to borderlands research. Books, with likely overlap in content:

* Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman, Designing Qualitative Research, 3rd edition.
*Sharlene Nagyt Hesse-Biber and Patricia Levy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research*

*Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition

*Julian Murchison, *Ethnography Essentials: Designing, Conducting, and Presenting Your Research*

*Henry Brady and David Collier, coeds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry*

*Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, eds. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues* OR their *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, 2013

*For whomever will research vulnerable populations, such as undocumented persons: Anna Ochoa O'Leary, Colin Dees, and Scott Whiteford, coeds., *Uncharted Terrains: New Directions in Border Research Methodology, Ethics, and Practice* (University of Arizona Press 2013)

Some political science journals publish qualitative research and political anthropology, as do some political geography and border studies journals. Also see *Qualitative Inquiry, Qualitative Research, Qualitative Sociology, Qualitative Sociological Research*, and *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education/QSE* (see March 2013 issue!). Most anthropology/ethnography journals publish qualitative studies. Mixed methods studies are accepted in most social science journals.

Continuous perusal of local print and electronic media: *El Paso Times, Diario, El Paso Inc*, and/or *La Polaka* (with an eye for critical reading, contacts, ideas, and opportunities etc.)

**Course Outcomes**

*Methodological skills and experiences in qualitative and mixed approaches

*Ability to ask researchable questions, grounded in political science, but drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives

*Practice in assessing published research in qualitative and mixed approaches

*Preparation of a literature review

*Pre-proposal preparation and/or revising a seminar paper for the MA

*Knowledge of multiple opportunities in the borderlands and other spatially/historically/culturally distinctive areas (ie ‘area studies’)*

*Draft IRB Proposal and Consent Letter*

**Assessment**

*Midterm and final exams (short answer and essay questions) over reading: 20% each

*Attendance and Participation: 10% (no more than one excused absence permitted: withdrawal suggested or grade reduction consequence). Be ready to answer all the questions posed under
assignments below. Take notes! Keep a journal!! Good qualitative research requires detailed note-taking skills: listen, watch, and use all your senses. SCAN THE ENVIRONMENT WIDELY!

*Short assignments for class presentation about readings and campus/community observations (announcements to be made, such as the Jan 23 event): 20% NOTE: Select chapters and book to present in future weeks.

*Final Project: Thesis proposal or draft chapter containing all elements of this seminar, 10-20 pp (30%)

**Academic Honesty.** No plagiarism! Cite authors and provide page citations for quotes, arguments, contentious figures, etc. Read the following: [http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/](http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/)

For the differently abled: Contact the following if special accommodations are necessary.
[http://sa.utep.edu/cass/](http://sa.utep.edu/cass/)

**Assignments**

**Jan 19**

Introductions. Be prepared to address to the seminar: “In which researchable ‘natural settings’ have you been an ‘insider’ and what has sparked your curiosity enough to turn into possible research questions?

Desmond’s summary in *The New Yorker* (we will discuss his methods next week)
[http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/02/08/forced-out](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/02/08/forced-out) Can/should his research be replicated in a border community?


**Jan 26**

Beck & Maida, “Toward Engaged Anthropology.” (e-journal: *Anthropology in Action*)

[http://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/people/matthew-desmond](http://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/people/matthew-desmond) Glean and evaluate his multiple research methods from his methodological postscript. Reconsider question on replication above.

What leads, insights and/or research questions could you get from this photographic essay? “In 1993, photographer Patricia Evans took this photo of 10-year-old Tiffany Sanders. Almost 20 years later, Tiffany saw her photo on a book cover and got in touch with Evans. This is the story of what happened in those intervening years — to them, and to public housing in Chicago.” --NPR
Feb 2  To be discussed: “When, Where, and by Whom should Ethnography be Used?” Can anyone do ethnography? Be prepared to talk about your skill sets/personality in this sort of research. Consider links to power relations, polisci theories and concepts.

Each seminar participant should present FIVE chapters from Doing Cultural Anthropology, adding their own creative/imaginative input on THREE broadly defined political topics in the borderlands.

Feb 9  To be discussed: “Paradigms for Framing the Conduct of Ethnographic Research.” Which paradigm resonates most with you?

First Short Paper DUE (500 words): Observe, listen, and exercise detailed note-taking skills at a school board, neighborhood or community meeting, city council/county commissioner, or ? event (clear it first). Spend at least two hours and consider ‘chatting’ with people before or after the event. Don’t name names unless speakers are public officials. Present in class.

Feb 16  To be discussed: “An Overview of Research Design.” Select one of the following ethnographies to be reviewed and presented in class March 2. Prepare Short Paper DUE (500 words): Chose only ONE of the following classics in ethnography to present to class. Summarize the study, evaluate the research design and methodology, and speculate on the (unstated) paradigm. Present in class.

Alejandro Lugo, Fragmented Lives, Assembled Parts…(maquiladoras in Cd Juárez);

James Scott, Weapons of the Weak (peasant resistance as participation);

Angela Valenzuela, Subtractive Schooling…Houston HS;

Susan Rippberger & Kathleen Staudt, Pledging Allegiance: Learning Nationalism in El Paso-Juárez);

Herbert Kaufman, The Forest Ranger (old classic case study of a federal agency);

Timothy Dunn, Blockading the Border…;

David Spener, Clandestine Crossings: Migrants and Coyotes…;

Guadalupe Valdés, Con Respeto: Bridging the Distances Between Culturally Diverse Families and Schools;

Howard Campbell, Drug War Zone;

Alice Goffman, On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City (Philadelphia);

Malek and Hoke, Palestine Speaks: Narratives of Life under Occupation;

Feb 23  NO CLASS

March 2  PAPERS DUE/PRESENTATIONS!

To be discussed: bring your ideas. “Choosing and Designing a Research Project.”

March 9  Read and write your own abstract of two articles from different qualitative research journals (UTEP e-journals). Present and include as essay response. Midterm essays (500 words each): TBA, but involve comparing advantages and disadvantages of methodologies outlined in *Evicted* and *Doing Cultural Anthropology* (from what was read and presented by others)

SPRING BREAK

March 24  “Collecting Ethnographic Data” and “Community-Based Participatory Research”

Read the following together and tell the class why they connect (and what it might mean for our border region): McKenna, “Dow Chemical’s Knowledge Factories: Action Anthropology Against Michigan’s Company Town Culture” (*Anthropology in Action*) and Oscar Morales et al., “Structural Violence and environmental injustice: the case of a US-Mexico border chemical plant,” *Local Environment*, 2011 (another UTEP online journal); Staudt et al., *Environmental Justice, 2013* (also ejournal online)

March 23  “Data Analysis: How Ethnographers Make Sense of their Data.”

DUE: Prepare the first 3 pages of your proposed ethnography to include the introduction, research questions, theoretical framing, and data sources. Present in class

March 30  NO CLASS

April 6  To be discussed: “Identifying and Building Research Teams and Research Partnerships”

Staudt, “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Border Research Collaboration” (pdf)

April 13  NO CLASS

Review the template and consent letter formats, considering ‘your’ (pre-)proposed project in the [www.irbweb.org](http://www.irbweb.org) (one question in your final will be to submit a draft template)

April 20  To be discussed: “Applying Ethnography.” Prepare a draft dissemination plan for your (pre-)proposal project (besides writing a thesis).

Staudt, “Neoliberal Regimes, Research Methods, Local Activism” 2017 (pdf)

April 27/May 4  Papers drafts DUE! Presentations.

May 11  Final paper and exam due to kstaudt@utep.edu . Final exam (500 words each): (1) Prepare pre-proposal IRB, using template on line, (2) What are your major ‘take-aways’ from this course?

NOTE: Syllabus may change at the discretion of the professor.