

**Course Syllabus**  
**ANTH 410: Research Design**  
**(Sociocultural anthropology)**

Prerequisites: Anthropology major of junior or senior standing.

**Description**

This course is an independent study that initiates the senior sequence in anthropology. The Senior Project sequence – ANTH 410: Research Design, ANTH 411: Fieldwork, ANTH 421: Senior Thesis – is required of all students who plan to graduate as anthropology majors. In these three independent study courses students will apply their knowledge of the discipline's literature and theory to an anthropologically defined problem as they go through the process of designing, conducting, and writing up ethnographic research. The senior sequence culminates with the presentation of a senior thesis for approval by the department.

During ANTH 410, or the "Research Design" class, students will plan their research agenda and conduct background research for their upcoming field study. This field study may be undertaken in Oregon, elsewhere in the United States, or abroad. On the one hand, this research may be based on a formal internship, a service project, or a study-abroad program. On the other hand, it may involve more informal participant-observation with a specific community or social category. Students will decide upon and plan their field study in consultation with an advisor from the Department of Anthropology during the course of ANTH 410.

**Communitas**

Starting Winter 2006, students working on their Senior Projects (ANTH 410, 411, and 412) and anthropology faculty will meet weekly to share and discuss their anthropological research in progress in an informal and supportive setting. Other anthropology students, particularly those enrolled in our Theory and Methodology Series ANTH 324, 325 and 326, are encouraged to participate. The goal of the weekly meetings is to support students in their senior projects and create *communitas*. (*Communitas* is Victor Turner's concept for the experience of intense feelings of social togetherness and belonging.) Check the anthropology web site for details.

**Required Texts**

There are no required texts, except for readings that are assigned for the weekly *Communitas* meetings and other readings that are required by individual advisors.

However, all students are recommended to consult the texts that were used in ANTH 325: Ethnographic Methods as well as other books on methods in

the social sciences. The Hamersly Library has an excellent collection of books on ethnographic methods. Two good books on methods are:

Crane, Julia G., and Michael V. Angrosino

1992 Field projects in anthropology: a student handbook. Long Grove (IL): Waveland Press.

Kutsche, Paul

1997 Field ethnography: a manual for doing cultural anthropology. Upper Saddle River (NJ): Prentice Hall.

## Requirements

While students are enrolled in ANTH 410, they must meet their advisor during office hours once every week or two (you can schedule special appointments if your advisor's office hours do not fit in well with your schedule). The student must take the initiative in seeking out the professor. Failure to do so will diminish the student's final grade. Furthermore, students who do not stay in regular contact with their advisor will not be granted the privilege of an incomplete if they are unable to complete their research proposal by final's week. They will receive an F and, as is the university's policy, may take the class again and receive a new grade that will replace the F. Emails and brief discussions with your advisor after other classes do not suffice as satisfactory contact, therefore be sure to take the time to see your advisor regularly. Your advisor will keep a log that tracks your progress and contact.

During meetings with your advisor, you will work on accomplishing the following goals:

### 1. Selection of field site/community

- Contacting necessary organizations and/or individuals
- Preparing a personal resume (if necessary)
- Undergoing an interview with the desired organization (if necessary)
- Obtaining official research permission (if necessary)

### 2. Background Research:

- Compiling a bibliography of relevant library materials
- All items listed in the bibliography should be theoretically, regionally, or topically relevant to the student's proposed research objectives
- From this bibliography, students should designate a reading list of works to be read during the term (due week #2)
- Students should read approximately four books, or ten to fifteen articles
- Students should write four "annotated bibliographies" on these works, which will be reviewed by the professor (due in week 3, 5, 7, and 9)

- All books and articles cited in the research proposal should be cited in text according to the style adopted by the American Anthropological Association. The bibliography should be also formatted according to the American Anthropological Association Style Guide.

### 3. Definition of Research Objectives

- Writing a 10-page formal research proposal that consists of:
  1. Abstract
  2. Introduction
    - Research question
    - Personal motivation
  3. Literature review
  4. Objectives
  5. Population and sample
  6. Discussion of methodology
    - Prior experience
    - Research site
    - Data to be collected
    - Methods to collect that data
  7. Data analysis
  8. References cited
  9. Appendices
    - Timeline
    - Surveys
    - Interview guide
    - Participant observation guide
    - IRB application
- Submitting at least two preliminary drafts of this research proposal to the professor before the end of the term, in order to receive comments and editorial suggestions (aim to get first draft done by week 6 or 7).
- Submitting four copies of your final draft to the four anthropology faculty members.

4. Submission of an electronic version of your project title and abstract, which will be published on the department's web page. This is due when you submit your final proposal to your advisor.

### 5. Completion of the Anthropology Department's Ethics Contract

All students must read and sign the Department of Anthropology Ethics Contract, which states that they clearly understand their ethical responsibilities as researchers who work with human subjects. Students must also complete forms and gain approval from the university's IRB (Institutional Review Board) when they submit their final proposal.

### 6. Preparation of Materials for Data Collection

- Constructing preliminary questionnaires and interview guides that will be used in the research.
- Making arrangements to acquire or borrow necessary research materials (tape recorders, cameras, etc.).

### **Research Proposal Meeting – Week Nine**

Your thesis proposal will be read and evaluated by all faculty members in the Department of Anthropology. On the Friday of eighth week you give hard copies of our proposal to each faculty member. This version of your proposal should be reviewed by your advisor before you hand in the draft to all anthropology faculty members. Your proposal should demonstrate good theoretical grasp of the issues and well-thought out and appropriate methodology.

In ninth week you will present your research design in a formal presentation to anthropology professors, students, and other interested parties. At the presentation you will discuss research plans and receive advice and comments on your proposals from the audience. You will incorporate these in your final proposal which you submit to your individual faculty advisor for final approval to start your field research.

### **IRB application**

All students are required to submit their research proposal to the Internal Review Board (IRB) of Western Oregon University. The IRB will evaluate whether your research meets the ethics standards for work with human and animal subjects. Approval from the IRB is required if you want to present or publish your results, but it is not necessary to conduct your research. You can find more information and application forms at <http://www2.wou.edu:7777/pls/wou2/irbapp.form.app>

### **Grading**

Your grade for this course will be calculated as follows. See above for more details on what is expected of you for each item.

	Percentage of grade
Reading list	5
Annotated bibliography	20
Bi-weekly meetings with advisor	10
Participation in Communitas	10
Presentation of proposal	10
Final proposal	45
	100%

## **Final Notes**

Any anthropology student who earns A's in ANTH 410, ANTH 411, and 412 will be eligible to be honored as Outstanding Anthropology Student in late May of their senior year on Student Recognition Night

Anthropology majors who complete a senior thesis of outstanding quality will be encouraged to submit their paper to Focus – An Online Publication of Undergraduate Articles and Photography in Anthropology – and present their thesis at the Northwest Anthropological Conference.