

**Exploring Ethnography  
Department of Anthropology  
Lakehead University  
ANTH-2517  
Fall 2024**

**Instructor:** Frederico Oliveira, PhD  
**E-mail:** foliveir@lakeheadu.ca  
**Dates of Appointments:** September 4 to November 27, 2024  
**Classes Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 AM to 11:30 AM  
**Room:** OA-1033  
**Office Hours:** Thu (3 PM - 5 PM) or by appointment – Office: OR-1041

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**Land Acknowledgment:**

Lakehead University respectfully acknowledges its campuses are located on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples.

Lakehead University acknowledges the history that many nations hold in the areas around our campuses and is committed to a relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation.

**Course Description and Objectives:**

The understanding and explanation of cultural diversity worldwide is the focus of study of sociocultural anthropologists. Ethnography is the methods and systematic procedures by which anthropologists connect with people and gather relevant data that will inform more elaborated analysis of a particular social issue or a human cultural phenomenon. The meaning and purposes underlying how ethnography is applied have changed considerably since the origins of the discipline in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the current days. These changes also reflect the political, intellectual, and ethical transformations that have shaped anthropology and its "objects" of study since its foundation.

This is essentially a methods course that will provide directions to how sociocultural anthropology, as a scientific discipline, establishes rigour and scientific guidelines for data collection and organization of information. Differently from several other scientific fields, anthropology's "objects of study" present an elevated level of subjectivity. As a consequence, it becomes difficult to predict beforehand how the subjects will behave in each cultural context – and this is not even expected from an anthropologist. In that sense, each situation demands a specific methodological approach, which makes it almost impossible to dictate the rules that will be applied in the field. Many authors agree that the best way to learn ethnography is by reading other ethnographies and putting oneself in practical situations with real human beings. The course is organized to expose the students to a variety of ethnographies conducted by classical and contemporary authors. In addition, a number of ethnographic films will offer the visual component to bring the students closer to the real-life situations experienced by anthropologists. Class discussions and practical examples will exercise the students in the vast possibilities of engaging with people and analyzing cultural patterns beyond common sense perceptions.

The successful students are expected at the end of the course to be able to:

- a) Describe and see the limitations and potentials of the methods associated with ethnographical research;
- b) Understand how anthropologists elaborate research questions and direct their observation while doing fieldwork;
- c) Learn to be respectful of the research participant's cultural protocols and to follow ethical guidelines;
- d) Be familiar with scientific papers and their structural organization;
- e) Understand the differences and similarities between academic and applied anthropology;
- f) Develop, at least from the introductory level, the capacity to critically look and think anthropologically about social phenomena;

The course is organized around lectures and class discussions. We will go through some of the conceptual ideas about a particular topic in the initial sessions of each week, and then broader discussions will be proposed to expand such concepts or methodological debates in the second session. Discussions will form an essential part of the learning process and will revolve around current and controversial issues in anthropology. Student attendance and participation are essential.

### **Course Readings:**

Mannik, Lynda &. McGarry, Karen (2017). *Practicing Ethnography: A Student Guide to Method and Methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

A number of articles and book chapters are required readings and are listed below for each week. All are available electronically on the course website.

## **Course Requirements and Grading:**

Graded assignments include the following:

*Class Participation*  
15% of course grade

Film Critical Reviews  
20% of course grade (5% for each review)

Quizzes  
15% of course grade (5% for each quiz)

Midterm Exam  
20% of course grade

Final Project  
30% of course grade

***Class Participation:*** Attendance is mandatory. Reading (sometimes a lot) and attendance are critical to achieving a satisfactory grade and learning objectives in this course. Students are required to critically read all assigned materials prior to class and participate actively (in their own way) in class discussions and assignments.

***A Film Critical Review*** (of approximately 500 words) is required for four discussion sessions. That means that students are allowed to miss one delivery without a penalty. Each subsequent miss will result in a 5-point penalty for this assignment.

Film Critical Reviews are reflections on the week's film, associating the movie's content with the readings assigned for that week. Your review should consist of three parts clearly defined in your paper. First, provide a brief summary of the film. Second, indicate at least two associations between the film and the readings assigned for that week. Third, describe two highlights of the readings that made you better understand the application of ethnography.

***Quizzes:*** Four quizzes will be applied to verify the comprehension of basic concepts in ethnography. More details of the format and content will be provided.

***Mid-Term Exam:*** In order to verify the comprehension of the course material, students will be given a number of questions to respond to after the reading week. More details will be provided.

***Final Project*** – For this assignment, students will be given directions to elaborate their own ethnography. Each student should prepare an oral presentation to be given in the final week of class. You should also organize a written paper to be delivered by December 10. The Final Paper follows the format of a research paper. This assignment allows students to develop an in-depth practical exercise using the material seen during the course. Required length: 3000-4000 words, excluding bibliography. There will be a handout explaining the details of this assignment.

## **Policies and Procedures:**

### *Grading Policy:*

1. Avoid disrupting class by arriving late or leaving before the end of the class. Disruptions will result first in a warning and then in a 5% penalty to the student's final grade. If the student's behaviour is disturbing the learning environment of the class, they will be asked to leave.
2. It is expected that students will be respectful of their fellow students, their instructor, and cultures and traditions which are not their own.
3. Plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., that belong to someone else. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. This is a serious issue. Violation of the university's policy will result in a grade penalty or failure of the course. This type of violation will stay on your academic record.
4. Students will be allowed to take a make-up exam only in the case of documented emergencies. Each situation will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. If you miss a test for an emergency reason, approach the instructor as fast as possible to discuss your situation. It is at the instructor's discretion to select the format of the make-up exam that will be held in the final week of classes.
5. Students are responsible for taking their own lecture notes. Course outline and class slides will be posted online on Desire2Learn at least one week prior to the due date.
6. The primary communication tool between the instructor and students is Lakehead University's e-mail account. Students are asked to check regularly (including before the class) their LakeheadU e-mail account and Desire2Learn for unforeseen changes to the class due to weather conditions or other reasons. As a general rule, student questions sent 24 hours prior to an assignment or test will not be replied. Grades are supposed to be returned to the students for a maximum period of two weeks after the assignment is delivered.
7. Students are welcome to schedule appointments to discuss any topic related to their academic progress or course content.
8. This syllabus is subject to minor changes during the course of the semester.

## Course Schedule

**Week 1:**                      **Introduction to the Course**

(Sept-4)

**Week 2:**                      **Origins and development of fieldwork in Sociocultural Anthropology**

(Sept-9)

**Film**

(Sept-11)

Mannik, Lynda &. McGarry, Karen (2017). Introduction and Chapter 1 (The Origins and Development of Sociocultural Anthropological Fieldwork in North America). In: *Practicing Ethnography: A Student Guide to Method and Methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 1-33.

Moore, Jerry. (2009). Franz Boas: Culture in Context (Chapter 3)  
In: *Visions of Culture*. Lanham: Altamira Press, pp. 33-45.

**Film Critical Review is to be submitted by 10 AM on Sept. 11.**

**Week 3:**                      **Practicing Ethnography I: Participant Observation**

(Sept-16)

Mannik, Lynda &. McGarry, Karen (2017). Chapter 2 (Participant Observation). In: *Practicing Ethnography: A Student Guide to Method and Methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 34-50.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. [1922]. Introduction: Argonauts of the Western Pacific". New York. E.P. Dutton, pp. 1-25.

Clifford Geertz. 2005. "Deep Play: notes on a Balinese cockfight" (from *Daedalus Journal*), pp. 56-87.

(Sept-18)

**\*\* Quiz #1 \*\* (covering the content of Weeks 2 and 3)**

**Week 4:**                      **Practicing Ethnography II: Connecting with Others**

(Sept-23)

**Film**

(Sept-25)

Mannik, Lynda &. McGarry, Karen (2017). Chapter 4 (Connecting with others: interviews, conversations, and life stories). In: *Practicing Ethnography: A Student Guide to Method and Methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp.69-84.

Gladwell, Malcolm. (2019). "Introduction: Step out of the car". In: *Talking to Strangers: What we should know about the people we don't know*. New York, Boston, London. Little, Brown and Company, pp. 1-16

Gladwell, Malcolm. (2019). "Chapter 6: The Friends fallacy". In: *Talking to Strangers: What we should know about the people we don't know*. New York, Boston, London. Little, Brown and Company, pp. 145-167.

**Film Critical Review is to be submitted by 10 AM on Sept. 25.**

**Week 5:**

**Practicing Ethnography III: Ethics and the Politics of Fieldwork**

(Sept-30)

Mannik, Lynda &. McGarry, Karen (2017). Chapter 3 (Ethics and the Politics of Fieldwork). In: *Practicing Ethnography: A Student Guide to Method and Methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp.51-68.

Carsten, Janet. (2000). "Knowing Where You've Come from: Ruptures and Continuities of Time and Kinship in Narratives of Adoption Reunions". In: *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 6(4): 687-703.

(Oct-2)

**\*\* Quiz #2 \*\* (covering the content of Weeks 4 and 5)**

**Week 6:**

**After fieldwork - Analyzing the data**

(Oct-7)

**Film**

(Oct-9)

Mannik, Lynda &. McGarry, Karen (2017). Chapter 6 (After Fieldwork – Analyzing the Data). In: *Practicing Ethnography: A Student Guide to Method and Methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp.105-122.

Marcia Inhorn. (2003). "The Worms Are Weak". Male Infertility and Patriarchal Paradoxes in Egypt". In: *Men and Masculinities*, 5(3): 236-256.

**Film Critical Review is to be submitted by 10 AM on Oct. 9.**

**Week 7:**

**Fall Reading Week**

(No Class: Thanksgiving & Fall Reading Week, Oct 14-18)

**Week 8:**

(Oct-21)

**Review of the course readings and preparation for the Midterm Exam**

(Oct-23)

**Midterm Exam**

**Week 9:****Ethnography as Writing and the Politics of Representation**

(Oct-28)

**Film**

(Oct-30)

Mannik, Lynda &. McGarry, Karen (2017). Chapter 7 (Writing up and the Politics of Representation). In: *Practicing Ethnography: A Student Guide to Method and Methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp.123-139.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture". In: *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 3-32.

James Clifford: "On Ethnographic Authority." In: *Representations* 1(2), pp. 118-146.

**Film Critical Review is to be submitted by 10 AM on Oct. 30.**

**Week 10:****Applied Anthropology**

(Nov-4)

Mannik, Lynda &. McGarry, Karen (2017). Chapter 8 (Applied Anthropology). In: *Practicing Ethnography: A Student Guide to Method and Methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp.143-159.

Gruenbaum, Ellen. (2010). "Honorable Mutilation? Changing Responses to Female Genital Cutting in Sudan". In: *Anthropology and Public Health Bridging Differences in Culture and Society*. (Robert A Hahn, Marcia Inborn, eds.), pp. 397-421.

(Nov-6)

**\*\* Quiz #3 \*\* (covering the content of Weeks 9 and 10)**

**Week 11:****Autoethnography: Shifting Perspectives**

(Nov-11)

**Film**

(Nov-13)

Mannik, Lynda &. McGarry, Karen (2017). Chapter 9 (Autoethnography: the Self and the Other Revisited). In: *Practicing Ethnography: A Student Guide to Method and Methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp.160-175.

Mosse, David. (2006). "Anti-social anthropology? Objectivity, objection, and the ethnography of public policy and professional communities". In: *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (NS) 12, pp. 935-956.

**Film Critical Review is to be submitted by 10 AM on Nov. 13.**

## **Week 12:** Thought-Provoking Ethnographies

(Nov-18) Brodwin, Paul. (2011). Futility in the Practice of Community Psychiatry. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 25 (2): 189-208.

Gusterson, Hugh. (1996). *Nuclear Rites: A Weapons Laboratory at the End of Cold War* (Chapter 5: Bodies and Machines). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

(Nov-20) **\*\* Quiz #4 \*\* (covering the content of Weeks 11 and 12)**

## **Week 13:** Final Project Presentations

(Nov-25)

(Nov-27)

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### **Desire2Learn**

The course uses Desire2Learn for its course website. To access the course website or any other Desire2Learn-based course website, go to the LU portal login page at <https://myinfo.lakeheadu.ca/> and log in using your LU username and password. Once you have logged in to the portal, look for the **mycourselink** module, where you'll find the link to our course website along with the link to all other Desire2Learn-based courses you are registered.

### **Use of AI**

Generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI or GenAI) is a category of AI systems capable of generating text, images, or other media in response to prompts. These systems include ChatGPT and its variant Bing (built by OpenAI) and Bard (built by Google), among several others. Other Generative AI models include artificial intelligence art systems such as Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, and DALL-E. **Any use of GenAI systems to produce assignments for this course is not permitted.** All work submitted for evaluation in this course must be the student's original work. The submission of any work containing AI-generated content will be considered a violation of academic integrity ("Use of Unauthorized Materials").

### **Accessibility Needs**

Lakehead University is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.