**Mini-Ethnographic Group Research Project: Overview**

**Medical Anthropology**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The major assignment of this course is structured around a mini- ethnographic group research project. You will be divided into groups of 4 students. With your group, you will choose a topic of interest to you relating to people’s experiences of health, illness and healing. You will conduct interviews, analyze your data, write a research report on your findings, and present your findings to the class. More details to follow throughout the semester.

**PROJECT COMPONENTS**

This entire project is worth 40% of your grade in this class. The project will consist of the following components (more details TBA):

* **Topic Proposal and Plan** (5%): As a group, you will decide on a topic for your research, and come up with a plan about who you are going to interview, what you will ask them, and write up a schedule to make sure it gets done in a timely manner. (\*If you are interested in presenting or publishing on this work, the structure and format of your Proposal and Plan would follow the university IRB guidelines. Please talk to me further if you are interested in potentially doing this).
* **Annotated Bibliography** (2%): Each student will find 2 academic sources on the topic you are studying and submit an annotated bibliography. You should discuss what aspects of this topic you will be responsible for researching, and try to come up with a plan so that you are not replicating each others’ work. You will submit one annotated bibliography per group.
* **Interview Transcripts and Field Notes** (raw data) (3%): Each student will be responsible for conducting and transcribing (typing up from an audio recording) 3 interviews, and submitting at least 3 sets of field notes. On the same day you conduct each interview, you should type up your observations, reflecting on your time with the person, the context of the interview, the surroundings, any initial interpretations or analyses you might have. You may want to conduct your interviews with at least one partner from your group, to ensure reliability, and to allow any additional insights to be gained from your partner’s observations of the interview. However, for some topics, it might be best to only have one person in the room (depending on the sensitive nature of the topic and the comfort level of the person you are interviewing). Depending on your project, you might also want to conduct observations outside of your interviews, and you should submit field notes for these observations as well.
* **Coded Transcripts** (8%): We will be spending a good deal of time in class learning how to group code qualitative research, and the coding will take place during class time and outside of class time as well. You will be working together to come up with codes that emerge from your data, learning processes for coming to consensus, and learning how to draw conclusions from your findings based on these codes. We will be learning about interrater reliability and theoretical saturation. Coding methods and technology options will be discussed further.
* **Research Presentations** (5%): Your team will present a 15-20 minute presentation on your findings.
* **Peer and Self Evaluations** (2%): Because the majority of the work in this class is group work, you will be evaluating your group members to ensure accountability to your peers. Your peers’ evaluation of you will be calculated into your grade on this project.
* **Mini-Ethnography Final Report** (15%): The final product of this mini-ethnographic project will be an 8-10 page report. Forthcoming guidelines for this report will lay out the specific sections and expectations for this assignment.

**\*\*A note about the work\*\*** Keeping up with deadlines and getting things done in advance is key to success in this project. Set up your interviews as early as possible. The transcribing, coding and interpretation will take the most time, so you do not want to leave that until the last minute. (Transcribing a 30 minute interview takes approximately 2 hours). I have built in many deadlines into the syllabus to keep you on task, but have also made suggestions on the Canvas schedule as a guide for when to have the work done so you are able to complete the project on time, and so you can use the class time provided wisely.

**Medical Anthropology: Mini-Ethnography**

**Topic Proposal and Plan** (5%): As a group, you will decide on a topic for your research, and come up with a plan about who you are going to interview, what you will ask them, and write up a schedule to make sure it gets done in a timely manner.

Your Topic Proposal and Plan should contain the following sections.

1. Group members: please list all group members’ names.
2. Project Title: Please include a creative project title, it’s ok if it changes later based on the way the project develops.
3. Topic overview: please write a short paragraph describing the topic you would like to explore during your research, and what kinds of problems or issues you are going to investigate, and what kinds of general questions you will seek to answer through your investigation.
4. Research plan: please describe the research procedures, including how you will recruit participants, where you will be interviewing them, how many people you will interview, how you will record the interviews (ie. what technology or app will you use), and the schedule for each of your interviews. Please see Canvas for relevant deadlines.
5. Interview Question Guide: Please list the questions you plan to use as your guide when conducting the interview. Remember, with open-ended qualitative interviews, you don’t need to stick to a strict list of questions, but each interviewer should be working from the same guiding questions, following up as needed. See QRM pages 41-45 for useful tips about designing questions and how to effectively use probes.
6. Informed Consent: Please write out a short script that you will either read or use as a guide before conducting an interview to ensure confidentiality and privacy. The script should start with the following sentences (which you may copy and paste):
   1. We are conducting research on [insert your research topic]
   2. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary, and we are not providing any compensation for your participation.
   3. This interview will take [insert expected length of interview], and will be recorded on [insert recording device, such as ‘my phone’].
   4. Even though you agree to participate in this research, you may stop at any time or skip any questions you do not wish to answer.
   5. We will keep your information confidential by [list strategies you will use to keep information confidential including how you will store the voice recordings and transcriptions, what documents will have identifying information, and pseudonyms you will use
   6. If you have any questions after the interview, you can contact me [insert how you want to be contacted, provide paper with contact information].

**MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY:**

**Annotated Bibliography** (2%): Each student will find 2 academic sources on the topic you are studying and submit an annotated bibliography. You should discuss what aspects of this topic you will be responsible for researching, and try to come up with a plan so that you are not replicating each others’ work. You will submit one annotated bibliography per group with 6-8 sources (depending on the number of group members), but**it should be clear which students completed which annotated sources** as you will be graded individually.

***What’s in an Annotated Bibliography?***

An entry in an annotated bibliography should be about four sentences and it includes 1) the citation for your source, just like in a regular bibliography, followed by 2) a short paragraph that describes the source, and answers the following questions (see below).

**Your description may include the following:**

1. A **summary**of the material (its main points or arguments in a few sentences)
2. An **evaluation** of the source (its strengths or weaknesses)
   * How recent is it? An old article can be a strength (if you’re looking for a historical perspective) or a weakness (if you’re researching a contemporary issue).
   * Is it a reputable author/journal?
   * Any other obvious weaknesses? Strengths?
3. **How it fits in with your other sources** (if it supports your other materials or brings up new questions, highlights new evidence, or introduces a different point of view)
4. **An assessment of its value** to your research (its importance or usefulness)
   * What aspect of your argument are you using this piece to support?
   * What part of your research question does it help you answer?

**FINAL REPORT**

**Mini-Ethnographic Group Research Project**

**Medical Anthropology**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The final project for this mini-ethnographic research will be an 8-10 page report, double spaced, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman. You should use subheadings where possible. You may write the report together as a group or you can divide up the paper however you like. Remember, you will all receive the same grade for the final draft (though you will have a chance to evaluate each other’s contributions), so leave time to edit each other’s work and make sure it’s up to your standards, and all fits together well. The report will include the following sections.

1. **Introduction**: 1-2 paragraphs, including:
   1. Introduction to the central problem/questions
   2. Background info on the topic (drawing on your sources from your annotated bibliography)
   3. 4 Research Findings Statements (see section D Findings).
   4. A thesis that pulls together these 4 Research Statement Findings (when you think bout them all together, what do they tell you about your research)?
2. **Methods**: 1-2 paragraphs, including:
   1. Recruitment strategies
   2. Number of participants, demographics of participants, and lengths of interviews
   3. Topics of interviews – you don’t need to list all the questions, but can talk about the general categories of questions or types of questions you asked
   4. Describe group coding strategy
3. **Findings**: This will be the bulk of your paper, approx. 4-6 pages. You should come up with 4 Research Findings Statements. For each of these Research Findings Statements you should write about 1-2 pages that covers the following:
   1. Write out the statement and briefly introduce it.
   2. Illustrate the findings with ethnographic examples from your interviews and/or your notes. When citing interviews, you can use direct quotes from the interviews, or you can discuss someone’s story in your own words, or a bit of both.
4. **Conclusion**: 1-2 paragraphs
   1. Summarize your research
   2. Discuss how the 4 Research Findings Statements fit together and connect to your thesis
   3. Suggest some possible approaches either for future research (to find out more about the topic that would be important) or suggest ways that the people you researched might be supported or the problem you identified might be addressed.

**More about Research Findings Statements**: You should work as a group to come up with your research findings statement, and discuss qualitative data from your notes/interviews that you think best represents this finding. When thinking about the data all together, what did you find? What trends did you notice? What codes or themes recurred the most and what do they tell you about this issue? You might actually start with a thesis and work back to these statements, or come up with the statements first, and then think about what they all have in common and come up with a thesis from them. Your research statement might draw primarily from one code or theme, but it might also combine them in interesting ways.

**Example:** Let’s take the care of AIDS orphans in Lesotho as an example. In my data, I had a code file called “caregiving” and another code file called “gender”. I noticed some trends across these codes. One of my Research Findings Statements could be: Men in Lesotho are increasingly taking on the role of caregiver for AIDS orphans.

Then, in introducing this Research Findings Statement, I could further explain: Women in Lesotho are considered to be ideal caregivers for orphans, reflecting strongly held ideas about gender roles in rural communities. While care in Lesotho is a primarily female task, as the pressures of AIDS and orphanhood take their toll on the Basotho populations, men are increasingly providing care for orphans. Although the number of male caregivers is still small compared to women, they are socially significant given the strength of the preference for female caregivers. The men in this research often described their caregiving roles as feminine, further reinforcing stereotypical gender roles while at the same time subverting them. This growing group of caregivers is worth paying attention to, because as the pressures of AIDS and orphaning continues, men could provide an essential safety net for orphaned children as their caregiving grandmothers get older.

Then, in the remainder of the section on this Research Finding Statement, I could provide some ethnographic examples (ie. quotes from interviews, descriptions of people’s situations, findings from my field notes) of:

* People talking about women as ideal caregivers
* Examples of men providing care – both good and bad care
* Examples of men taking over care of orphans after a female caregiver dies
* Examples of people talking about male caregivers using feminine discourse,

Sometimes it might make sense for you to quote a larger section of an interview. Sometimes, to save space or to give more context, you might describe someone’s story, then include the most poignant quote(s) from their interview or your field notes.

Remember, you are looking for representative examples from across your data. So, you can use language such as: “Several of the interviewees noted…” then follow up with ones specific example such as: “One young 19-year old CSB student said she….”. Sometimes it makes sense to discuss outliers as well, but you should put them in context. “Only one participant noted x, y, z – while others said….” Then if you think you know why that outlier was there, explain it. So, in these sections, you are both providing the data/examples, and doing some basic analysis/explanation of them.

**Research Presentation**

**Medical Anthropology**

Your team will present a 15 minute presentation on your findings, worth 5% of your grade. Please prepare a tightly organized presentation with a discussion component. You may present all of your research findings or you might focus on one or two – it’s up to you to present what you think is most engaging about your research for presentation purposes. Please be sure to include some of the ethnographic material – pulling out compelling quotes or passages from your interviews and field notes. This is what brings qualitative research to life for audiences.

**Presentation Rubric:**

* Presentation: 30%
  + Clarity
  + Pace
  + Smooth
  + Organization
  + Creativity – Engaging
* Content: 60%
  + Introduction, including Research Question, background info
  + Methods
  + Findings
  + Conclusion/Future directions/potential solution (if problem oriented)
* Discussion: 10%
  + Spend at least 3-4 minutes on a discussion, or elicit class participation throughout presentation