

ENGLISH 7222: Topics in Literacy Studies
Ethnographies of Literacy

Tuesdays 3:10 – 6:00 p.m., Allen 202

Professor Sue Weinstein Phone: 578-7880 email: sweinst@lsu.edu
Office: Allen 43A Office hours: Tues. 12 – 3 and by appt.

Course Description:

This course combines the study of a scholarly field (New Literacy Studies) with an introduction to a qualitative research methodology (ethnography). These two topics function well together because New Literacy Studies focuses on reading and writing practices in specific social contexts, which ethnography provides us the tools for documenting. Each student in the seminar will be asked to conduct a mini-ethnography in a site of your choosing; I do not expect that these projects will result in immediately publishable manuscripts, but that the written reports you generate will demonstrate your growing understanding of the fields we are studying.

Required Texts:

Briggs, *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*

Cushman, *The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate Strategies in an Inner City Community*

Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*

Fishman, *Amish Literacy: What and How It Means*

Gee, *Social Linguistics and Literacies*

Heath & Street, *On Ethnography: Approaches to Language and Literacy Research*

Kleinman & Copp, *Emotions and Fieldwork*

Moss (ed.), *Literacy Across Communities*

Van Maanen, *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*

Warren, *Gender Issues in Field Research*

Weinstein, *Feel These Words: Writing in the Lives of Urban Youth*

Yagelski, *Literacy Matters: Reading and Writing the Social Self*

Assignments:

- Reading presentation: Each student in the class will be responsible for preparing a handout and leading discussion on one of the assigned readings. Presentation dates will be chosen the first day of class.
- Observation exercise (1-2 pages): Sit in a site for half an hour, taking notes on all text and text-based activity occurring in that site (including conversations about text, interactions with text, references to nearby or absent texts, etc.).
- Project proposal (3-5 pages): Each student will submit a proposal for the mini-ethnography they will conduct this semester. The format for this proposal should follow Heath and Street's list of ethnographic "decision rules" (pp. 46-47).
- Literature Review (3-5 pages): Use the 3 components of the literature review in Heath & Street p. 53. A revision of this literature review will become part of the final project.
- Final project (15-20 pages): Each student will complete a mini-ethnography by the end of term, focused on literacy practices within one specific site/community. Students wanting feedback can submit a draft of the final paper to the professor up to 2 weeks before the due date, to allow time for written response and revision.

DATE/TOPIC	READING/ACTIVITY	ASSIGNMENTS
8/25 Introduction	Discussion, review syllabus	
9/1 New Literacy Studies	<i>Social Linguistics and Literacies</i> , Gee	Presenter:
9/8 Ethnography Overview	<i>On Ethnography</i> (Heath & Street)	Presenter: Observation Exercise due
9/15	<i>Tales of the Field</i> (Van Maanen)	Presenter:
9/22	<i>Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research</i> (Briggs)	Presenter: Project Proposals Due
9/29	<i>Writing Ethnographic Field Notes</i> (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw)	Presenter:
10/6	<i>Literacy Across Communities</i> (Moss, ed.)	Presenter:
10/13	<i>Literacy Matters: Writing and Reading the Social Self</i> (Yagelski)	Presenter: Literature Review Due
10/20	<i>The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate Strategies in an Inner City Community</i> (Cushman)	Presenter:
10/27	<i>Amish Literacy: What and How It Means</i> (Fishman)	Presenter:
11/3	<i>Feel These Words: Writing in the Lives of Urban Youth</i> (Weinstein)	Presenter:
11/10 Working with data	<i>Gender Issues in Field Research</i> (Warren) Student field notes, interview transcripts, etc.	Presenter:
11/17	<i>Emotions and Fieldwork</i> (Kleinman & Copp)	Presenter:

	Student field notes, interview transcripts, etc.	
11/24 Working with data	Student field notes, interview transcripts, etc.	
12/1	Student presentations	