**The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine**

**Department of Literary, Cultural, and Communication Studies**

**COMS 6009 Communication Research Methods Course Outline (Semester I)\***

**I. Course Description:** This year-long course (8 credits; 2 semesters) for MA, MPhil, PhD candidates explores a range of human communication research topics leading to the development of a research proposal topic based on concepts that have been the source of inquiry in the discipline. This postgraduate level course emphasizes critical reading and discussion of selected topics and concepts related to research in the various sub-fields of communication studies, including but not limited to health communication, communication education, mass-mediated communication and media studies, and corporate and organizational communication. Participants are encouraged to use systematic research procedures for developing human communication research topics and proposals in theoretical and applied settings. **Pre-requisite:** Normally a B+ grade in COMS 3099 or LING 3099 and exemption and credit based on a B+ grade in undergraduate courses COMS 2901 Communication Theory and COMS 2902

**Semester I: Ethnographic Research Methods**

**II. Lecturer:**  Dr. Michael S. Jeffress; **Email:** michael.jeffress@sta.uwi.edu; **Office hours:** Tuesday 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (or by appointment); **Office location:** FHE 325; **Office Phone:** 662-2002, ext. 83030; **Web & Social Media:** MichaelJeffress.com; Twitter: @CommprofessorMJ; Facebook: facebook.com/authormichaeljeffress; Linkedin: Linkedin.com/in/michaelsjeffress

**III. Course Description:** Ethnography entails the examination and careful study of people and the group or cultural context within which they live. Typically, ethnographic studies are on a small scale involving prolonged, intimate and detailed contact between the ethnographer and the person or group he or she is studying. Such study comprises both description and interpretation and hence crosses the gap between “science” and the “humanities.” This advanced level ethnography course is designed to acquaint students with the theoretical and practical challenges and problems inherent in the ethnographic enterprise.

Ethnography, by its very nature, entails intimate involvement with the “other.” In keeping with the current “postmodern” milieu, it is this very involvement which will form the focus of this course as each student explores the ways in which the “other” can be engaged and described without “undue” exploitation. Thus, issues of ethics, ideology, hegemony, respect, authority, identity, freedom and openness will play a vital role in each student’s engagement with the “other.”

Central to this research methodology is the placing of ethnographic analysis within a larger theoretical discourse. Hence, the importance placed on both “grounded theory” and a theoretical perspective, which can enrich and enlarge the potential insights operating in a specific research project. Thus, each student will be strongly encouraged to pursue and investigate specific “social science” and “interpretive” theories as they apply to their project.

As a graduate level course designed for students from a variety of backgrounds and academic experience each student is free to choose any subject for their ethnographic project, especially as it relates to his or her academic and professional interests. However, in light of the brief and intense nature of this class each student will be given the opportunity to work on a project with the professor. For those choosing this option they will also be given the opportunity to participate in writing an article or a chapter for a book using an ethnographic approach to research.

While there are several types of qualitative research this class will focus primarily on ethnographic research. However, every attempt will be made to incorporate into the class examples and instruction on several other kinds of qualitative research.

**IV. Semester I Course objectives:** This course will offer an equal emphasis on theory and practice with the aim of helping each student come to appreciate both the experiential and theoretical dimensions of the ethnographic act. At the end of this course the attentive student should be able to:

* list and explain the problems and challenges inherent in engaging, describing, and interpreting the “other” who forms the center of his or her ethnographic “text.”
* identify some of the key thinkers and theorists of ethnography and its discourse, theory and practice.
* develop proficient skills in the speaking, listening, observing, note taking, and interviewing required of ethnographers.
* analyze, interpret, and “write up” ethnographic data in terms of a given methodological and/or theoretical perspective.

**V. Course Materials**

**A. Required Textbooks:**

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Goodall, H. L., Jr. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press

Jeffress, M. S. (2017). *Communication, sport and disability: The case of power soccer*. New York: Routledge

Yin, R. K. (2015). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (2nd Ed.). New York: The Guilford Press

**B. Highly Recommended Textbooks:**

Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Emerson, R. M., Fritx, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Ethnography* (2017) Special Issue: Innovations in Ethnographic Methodology, *18*(3).

Goodall, H. L., Jr. (2009). *Writing Qualitative Inquiry: Self, Stories, and Academic Life*. New York: Routledge.

Griffin, E., Ledbetter, A., & Sparks, G. (2014). A First Look at Communication Theory. (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. See: <http://www.afirstlook.com/book>.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (4th ed.).Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pink, S. (2013). *Doing visual ethnography* (3rd Ed.).Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Saldãna, J. (2015). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

**C. Recommended Textbooks & Readings:**

Adams, T. E., Jones, S. H., & Ellis, C. (2014). *Autoethnography.* Understanding Qualitative Research Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ang, I. (1990). “Culture and Communication: Towards an Ethnographic Critique of Media Consumption in the Transnational Media System.” *European Journal of Communication*. 5, 239-260.

Archer, M. S. (Ed.). (2013). *Conversations about Reflexivity*. New York: Routledge.

Atkinson, R. (2002). *The Life Story Interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bauman, R. (1986). *Story, Performance, and Event: Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative*.

New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bauman, R. (1984). *Verbal Art as Performance*. Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press, 1984.

Ben-Amos, D. & Goldstein, K. S. (Eds.). (Reprint). (2013). *Folklore: Performance and Communication*. The Hague: Mounton.

Bird, S. E. (1992). “Travels in Nowhere Land: Ethnography and the ‘Impossible’ Audience.” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *9*(3), 250-260.

Bochner, A. P. (2014). *Coming to Narrative: A Personal History of Paradigm Change in the Human Sciences*. New York: Routledge.

Bower, G. H. and Cirilo, R. K. “Cognitive Psychology and Text Processing.” In *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Vol. One: Disciplines of Discourse. Ed. Teun A. Can Dijik. New York: Academic Press, 1975.

Bowman, B., Bowman G. W., & Resch, R. C. (1984). “Humanizing the Research Interview: A Posthumous Analysis of LeRoy Bowman’s Approach to the Interviewing Process.” *Quality and Quantity, 18*(2), 159-171.

Brodkey, L. (1987). “Writing Ethnographic Narratives.” *Written Communication, 4*(1), 25-50.

Clerke, T., & Hopwood, N. (2013). *Doing Ethnography in Teams: A Case Study of Asymmetries in Collaborative Research*. New York: Springer.

Clifford, J. (1988). *Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Conquergood, D. (1991). “Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics.” *Communication Monographs,* *58*(2), 179-194.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Linclon, Y. S. (2017). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Dijkstra, W. (1987). “Interviewing Style and Respondent Behavior: An Experimental Study of the Survey Interview.” *Sociological Methods & Research, 16*(2), 309-334.

Ellen, R. F. (Ed.) (1987). *Ethnographic Research: A Guide to General Conduct*. (New ed.) Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.

Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. P. (1996). *Composing Ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Emmison, M. & Smith, P. (2013) *Researching the Visual* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Erickson, K. & Stull, D. (1998). *Doing Team Ethnography: Warnings and Advice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fetterman, D. M. (2009). *Ethnography Step by Step* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fine, E. C. and Speer, J. H. (1992). *Performance, Culture, and Identity*. Westport, CT: Preager.

Fitzgerald, T. K. (1991). “Media and Changing Metaphors of Ethnicity and Identity.” *Media, Culture and Society*, 13(2), 193-214.

Geertz, C. (1983). *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Graesser, A. C. and Clark L. F. (1985). “Constructing Structures during Narrative Prose Comprehension.” In *Structures and Procedures of Implicit Knowledge*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

Gubrium, J.F., Holstein, J.A., Marvasti, A.B. & McKinney, K.D. (Eds.) (2012). *The Sage Handbook of Interview Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hertz, R. (Ed.). (1997). *Reflexivity & Voice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hunt, C., & Sampson, F. (2005). *Writing: Self & Relfexivity*. (3rd ed.). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Jones, S. H., Adams, T. E., & Ellis, C. *Handbook of Autoethnography.* (2016). New York: Routledge.

Kaplan-Weinger, J., & Ullman, C. (2015). *Methods for the Ethnography of Communication: Language in Use in Schools and Communities*. New York: Routledge.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, M., & Saldãna, J. (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Morrissey, C. T. (1984). “Riding a Mule through the ‘Terminological Jungle’: Oral History and Problems of Nomenclature.” *The Oral History Review, 12*(1), 13-28.

O’Flaherty, W. D. (1988). *Other People’s Myths: The Cave of Echoes*. New York: Macmillan.

Paredes, A. (1977). “On Ethnographic Work among Minority Groups: A Folklorist’s Perspective.” *The New Scholar,* *6*, 1-32.

Philipsen, G. (1975). “Speaking Like a Man in Teamsterville: Cultural Patterns of Role Enactment in an Urban Neighborhood.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* *61*(1), 13-22.

Pink, S., Kurti, L., & Alfonso, A. I. (Eds.) (2004). *Working Images: Visual Research and Representation in Ethnography*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Riessman, C. K. (2007). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Roemer, M. (1995). *Telling* *Stories: Postmodernism and the Invalidation of Traditional Narrative*. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield.

Sanders, R. E. (1981). “The Interpretation of Discourse.” *Communication Quarterly, 29*(3), 209-217.

Savill-Torike, M. (2003). *The Ethnography of Communication: An Introduction* (3rd ed.). New York: NY: Blackwell Publishers.

Speer, J. H. (1975). “Folklore and Interpretation: Symbiosis.” *The Southern Speech Communication Journal, 40*(4), 365-376.

Spradley, P. J. (2016) *The Ethnographic Interview*. (Reissue ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Spradley, P. J. (2016). *Participant Observation.* (Reissue ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Twigg, R. (1994). “The Problem of ‘Serious’ Fiction: Modernization and the Textual Politics of Nineteenth-Century Literary Realism and Ethnography.” *Text and Performance* *Quarterly*. *14*(1), 1-20.

Werner, O., & Schoephe, G. M. (1987). *Systematic Fieldwork: Foundations of Ethnography and Interviewing*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Wolcott, H. F. (1990). “Making a Study ‘More Ethnographic.’” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 19*(1), 44-72.

van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography* (2nd ed.). Chicago: IL. University of Chicago Press.

**D. Recommended Exemplar Ethnographic Studies.** (Article length case studies are widely found in journals such as: *Ethnography, Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Ethnology, Qualitative Inquiry*, and *Qualitative Sociology*.)

Arvigo, R., & Epstein, N. (1995). *Sastun: My Apprenticeship with a Maya Healer*. New York: Harper-Collins.

Berry, K. (2016). *Bullied: Tales of torment, identity, and youth*. New York: Routledge.

Boylorn, R. (2013). *Sweetwater: Black Women and Narratives of Resilience.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Chawla, D. (2014). *Home,* *Uprooted: Oral Histories of India’s Partition*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Demick, B. (2010). *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Duneier, M. (2000). *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Duneier, M. (1994). *Slim’s Table: Race, Respectability, and Masculinity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Ewart, E. (2014). *Space and Society in Central Brazil: A Panará Ethnography*. New York: Bloosmbury Academic.

Fadiman, A. (1997). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures. New York.*  Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Hall , S. (2013). *City, Street and Citizen: The Measure of the Ordinary*. New York: Routledge.

Hughey, M. (2012). *White Bound: Nationalists, Antiracists, and the Shared Meanings of Race*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Matthews, G. (2011). *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Olwig, K. F. (2007). *Caribbean Journeys: An Ethnography of Migration and Home in Three Family Networks*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Reno, J. O. (2016). *Waste Away: Working and Living with a North American Landfill*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Shavarini, M. K. (2012). *Desert Roots: Journey of an Iranian Immigrant Family.* El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing.

Srinivas, M. N. (2012). *The Remembered Village*. (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wardle, H. (2001). *An Ethnography of Cosmopolitanism in Kingston, Jamaica*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Weiss, R. S. (1995). *Learning from strangers*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

**VI. Course Requirements:** Because of the brief and intense nature of this course, it is critical that **all** assignments be completed and done so on time.

A. It is imperative that you purchase and read the textbooks. You will be required to bring your books to class. All required reading must be read and “digested” before the class period they are due.

1. For those new to post-graduate studies, it will require a paradigm shift from your experiences in undergraduate programs. In the latter, a lecturer tends to serve as a “sage on stage” who lectures, and students take notes and regurgitate information in exams and apply content through assignments. In post-graduate courses, the lecturer is more of a “mentor in the middle.” My role is not to provide you with content as much as it is to help you process and understand the content that you discover through your readings and research, to help you build upon what you learned in undergraduate studies and integrate it into your research.

2. This means that, even more than you were accustomed to in undergraduate courses, you must come to class prepared to engage and contribute to the discussion. Indeed, at times you will be called upon to lead class discussions on assigned readings, as well as present findings of your research.

B. Attendance to **all** class meetings is expected and required. If you miss a lecture you will be required to do extra make-up work for the contact hours missed. Such make-up work may include writing a 2,000 word essay on an assigned topic, being assigned to give the lecture at the next class, doing article/book chapter reviews, etc. Students who miss more than 3 class meetings will receive a final grade of zero for Semester I course work.

C. Each student will orally present two written abstracts dealing with ethnographic theory and/or practice or a particular social science or “interpretive” theory which can increase our sensitivity to the operative dynamics entailed in ethnographic projects. The abstracts can be based on an article from a scholarly journal or chapter from a scholarly book. The recommended readings are intended to stimulate thinking in this regard. The instructor must approve all abstracts. Students will need to co-ordinate to ensure no articles or book chapters are repeated.

D. Each student will conduct two short ethnographic field exercises and write up their response to this experience and present their findings to the class. Such exercises will include but not be limited to observational studies, dialogue transcriptions, open-ended interview, data analysis, participant observation, informant interactions, etc.

E. During week six of the term each student will present for class critique a brief proposal (4-6 pages) for their class ethnographic pilot research project. Such a proposal will include a brief “literature review,” justification for the project, proposed methodological approach to the topic, and any relevant theoretical possibilities.

F. Each M.A. student must submit a 15-20 page paper (typed, double-spaced, 12-pt. Times New Roman font, 1” margins) based on their proposal and ethnographic pilot research project; M.Phil./Ph.D. students shall submit a 20-25 page paper.

1. Page counts are exclusive of title page and appendices. Projects will be submitted as both a hardcopy and as a MS-Word document. The soft deadline for projects will be the last class meeting of Semester I and a hard deadline of no later than the first class meeting of Semester II. Papers submitted by the soft deadline will be marked and returned with feedback at the first class meeting of Semester II. Papers submitted by the hard deadline will be marked and returned by the end of Semester II.

2. Projects will include a literature review, methodology section that includes 1-3 research questions, analysis and interpretation of observational data and interview transcriptions, any applicable theoretical orientation, and conclude with a discussion of implications of the pilot study for development into a larger final thesis project. Coded field notes and interview transcripts will be submitted as appendices, but do not count toward the page count. Students are expected to engage in relevant, high-quality scholarly books and journal articles. Utilization of the library’s [**COMMUNICATION & MASS MEDIA COMPLETE - EBSCOHOST**](http://ezproxy.sastudents.uwi.tt:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?authtype=ip,uid&profile=ehost&defaultdb=ufh) database, among others, will be essential. All papers must be written with care to be grammatically and stylistically correct, proofed to ensure typographical errors are corrected and religiously follow APA guidelines. Any paper that has more than 10 typographical and/or style errors will be returned to the student ungraded and be subject to a late penalty when student revises and resubmits.

G. All students will take a final exam at the last class meeting of Semester I, which will serve as a mid-term for the year-long course. A final exam for both terms will be administered at the end of Semester II.

H. **All** assignments must be completed. Even if you miss an assignment deadline and have to submit it late for no credit, **all** assignments must be attempted and submitted in order to pass Semester I. Students cannot simply choose to skip an assignment and “take a zero” on it because they are satisfied with their grade average. You are enrolled in this class to learn and develop your skills; this cannot be achieved by manipulating a points system related to grading. You must complete **all** assignments to receive the full benefit and deserve a passing mark for it. That is my philosophy and one that I enforce in all of my courses.

**VII. Course Assessment:** Because this is a year-long course, you will not take your final exam over both terms or receive your final grade until the end of Semester II. At the end of Semester II you will receive a final grade assessed at 50% coursework and 50% final exam. Both components must be passed in order to pass the course, and the G.P.A. system is the one set by the university: A+ (90-100) A (80-89), A- (75-79) B+(70-74), B (65-69), B- (60-64) C+ (55-59), C (50-54) F1(45-49) F2 (40-44) F3 (0-39).

All your grades for the first term will be averaged with your grades for the second to achieve your final coursework grade, and you can expect some questions from the mid-term exam in Semester I to re-appear on the final exam at the end of Semester II.

The course work for Semester I will be assessed as follows:

In-class discussion and participation: 10%

Abstracts and presentations: 10%

Short ethnographic field exercises: 10%

Mid-term exam: 20%

Final paper: 50%

**VIII. Professional Academic Associations & Extra Credit**. Numerous academic associations exist for both faculty and post-graduate students to disseminate their research. These associations host annual conferences attended by thousands of scholars who present papers, and they sponsor workshops and publish scholarly journals year round. Two such associations that you are strongly encouraged to join with a discounted student membership are: International Communication Association (ICA) ([www.icahdq.org](http://www.icahdq.org)) and National Communication Association (NCA) [(www.natcom.org](http://(www.natcom.org)). The Communication Studies program has funds available to sponsor post-graduate students to attend annual conferences to present their research.

If your project shows promise, then I may invite you to join me at NCA or ICA on a panel to present your paper. In some cases, I may even be willing to assist students upon completion of their projects to edit and improve them in order to co-present or possibly co-publish a paper.

If you get a paper accepted and present it at either ICA or NCA (or possibly another regional academic conference, if approved), then I will award extra credit: 5% for a poster presentation and 10% for a paper presentation.

**IX. Academic Honesty.** As should be expected students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. This includes the avoidance of plagiarism, defined as the uses of written and oral words of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker’s or writer’s indebtedness to that person. This also applies to the use of papers and other materials previously submitted to other classes, either at The University of the West Indies or other institutions. Student work will be subject to anti-plagiarism screenings through Turnitin and/or other methods. Any violation of Academic Honesty will normally result in failure of the course. If you have any doubt as to what plagiarism is or what constitutes it, you are encouraged to read all the resources of Harvard University’s “Harvard Guide to Citing Sources” at: <https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/>.

**X.** **Student Feedback.** You will be given the opportunity to provide me, as well as university administration, with written feedback and to evaluate this course. However, you should feel free to bring any concerns to my attention at any time during the semester. I welcome your input, feedback and constructive criticism on this course.

**Course Schedule**

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| **Module** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Assigned Readings** |
| Week 1 | 5 Sept. | Course Introduction | Read Yin Chs. 1-3 |
| Week 2 | 12 Sept. | Understanding Qualitative Research | Read Yin Chs. 4-5 |
| Week 3 | 19 Sept. | Doing Qualitative Research I | Read Yin, chs. 6-7 |
| Week 4 | 26 Sept. | Doing Qualitative Research II | Read Yin, chs. 8-9 |
| Week 5 | 3 Oct. | Doing Qualitative Research III | Read Jeffress |
| Week 6 | 10 Oct. | Guest Lecture (TBD) |  |
| Week 7 | 17 Oct. | Presentation of Research Proposals | Read Goodall |
| Week 8 | 24 Oct. | The Case of Power Soccer |  |
| Week 9 | 31 Oct. | Writing the New Ethnography | Read Yin, chs. 10-11 |
| Week 10 | 7 Nov. | Presenting Results from Qualitative Research | Read for Research |
| Week 11 | 14 Nov. | Guest Lecture (TBD) |  |
| Week 12 | 21 Nov. | Course Review |  |
| Week 13 | 28 Nov. | Final Exam/Project Paper (Soft Deadline |  |

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\*This course outline is subject to change without notice. Updated: 4 September, 2017