

Field and Laboratory Methods
Ethnomusicology Seminar (Music 2442)
Mondays
Room 302
Fall 2008

Professor Andrew Weintraub
MB 305
Office Hours: TBA

This course examines various approaches to the ethnography of music in relation to cultural and social life. Particular emphasis will be placed on theories, methods, and practices developed within the fields of ethnomusicology, anthropology, and popular music studies. The course has a strong practical component in which students will conduct exploratory fieldwork projects in the Pittsburgh area. The course will present methods and techniques related to three main components of field research: 1) preparation (research design and proposal); 2) fieldwork (studying and documenting musical life *in situ*) and 3) ethnography (interpreting fieldwork experience and writing about it). Students will learn to develop practical skills including interviewing and eliciting techniques, the use of audio and video technology, and archiving and storage techniques. We will examine the history of ethnographic representation as a discursive practice that raises questions of authority, power, and cultural critique.

In addition to doing the readings, participating in class discussions and learning about photography, sound recording, and archiving, work for the course will include selecting a field site, community, or organization in the Pittsburgh area that you can visit *at least once per week*; writing up fieldnotes for each visit; documenting your site using technologies of digital audio and video recording and still photography; interviewing using questionnaires; observing and documenting a performance event at your site; developing an IRB protocol for your research, and archiving your field materials. The final product, due December 8, will be an oral presentation and descriptive essay about your site and the ethnographic questions it raises.¹

Required Texts (new and used copies available for purchase on-line; asterisk indicates reserve items):

*Emerson et al. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Hillman GN307.7 E44 1995

*Nettl, Bruno. 2005. *The study of ethnomusicology: thirty-one issues and concepts*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press. ML3798 .N47 2005

¹ Prof. Mary Hufford, Fieldwork Theory and Practice, Folklore 502, University of Pennsylvania.

*Van Maanen, John. 1988. *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Hillman GN307.7 V36

Equipment

You will need a portable Digital Recorder for conducting interviews. I recommend the Olympus WS-211 or 311M (approx. \$50-100). You will have access to a video recorder, digital camera, and digital audio recorder on a sign-out basis.

Grading: 3 Project Reports = 15%; 1 Report on Ethnography = 10%; Class Participation = 30%; Final Oral Presentation = 20%; Final Project = 25%

Schedule

(Readings should be prepared for the corresponding class session)

* = on reserve in the Music Library

August

25 Introduction to the Course

Historical orientation of ethnography in ethnomusicology; Topic, Scope, Theoretical Framework, Rationale, Methodology, Research Findings

Choose a site for your fieldwork project in Pittsburgh and make an appt. with me to discuss it. Once you've decided on your site, write a paragraph about it and send it to me via email by Sept. 1. By Sept. 8, make arrangements to visit your site with a 1-page handout that you can distribute to people at the site.

September

1 No class (Labor Day)

Reading:

*Nettl, Bruno. 2005. *The study of ethnomusicology: thirty-one issues and concepts*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press. ML3798 .N47 2005 [chapters]

*Stoller, Paul. "Introduction," and "The Senses of Anthropology," in *The Taste of Ethnographic Things*, pp. 3-11 and 125-56.0

*Titon, Jeff Todd and David Reck. [any edition]. "Discovering and Documenting a World of Music." In *Worlds of Music*, ed. Jeff Todd Titon. Schirmer. ML3545 .W67 2002 or other edition

8 Participant Observation

What is fieldwork? What are research methods? What is a theoretical framework? Pittsburgh as a field site

Watch: "Kitchen Stories" in class.

DUE: A list of people whom you have contacted for interviews (at least five names, addresses, and telephone numbers) and a schedule for interviews. Describe very briefly how these individuals fit into your project.

DUE Ethnography I: Choose one of the classic ethnographies in ethnomusicology listed below and write a 5-paragraph essay approximately three pages in length (double-spaced). Devote one paragraph each to Topic, Scope, Rationale, Theoretical Framework, Methodology, and Research Findings.

The following are on reserve in the Music Library:

Berliner, Paul. 1978. *The Soul of Mbira*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ML350 B47

*Keil, Charles. 1979. *Tiv Song*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ML3760 .K38

McAllester, David. 1949. *Peyote Music*. New York: Viking Fund publications in anthropology, no. 13. ML3557 .M3 1971

Neuman, Daniel. 1980. *The Life of Music in North India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ML338 N44 1990

Seeger, Anthony. 1987. *Why Suyas Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ML3575 B7 S36

Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. 1998. *Let jasmine rain down : song and remembrance among Syrian Jews*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ML3776 S53 1998

Sugarman, Jane. 1997. *Engendering Song*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ML3613 .S93 1997

15 Audio and Video Recording Techniques

Introduction to photography, field recording, and video recording equipment

DUE Project Report I: A 3-page project proposal for your fieldwork project including: title, topic, scope, thesis statement, theoretical framework, rationale, methodology, sources consulted, and intended research findings. Your proposal should include a bibliography with at least 15 *relevant* scholarly sources (books, journals, recordings, etc.).

22 Interviewing

Contacting people; creating questionnaires; release forms; conducting an interview; transcribing; evaluating results

DUE: A Transcribed Interview (minimum 30 minutes)

Read:

Hunt, Marjorie. 2003. *The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide*.

Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution. Downloadable at:
http://www.folklife.si.edu/explore/Resources/InterviewGuide/InterviewGuide_home.html

*Nettl, Bruno. 1964. *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology*. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe (Macmillan. ML3797 .N475 [c. 3 “Fieldwork”])

*Jackson, Bruce. 1987. “Microphones” In *Fieldwork*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. [c. 11]

29 Fieldnotes

Read:

*Emerson et al. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Hillman GN307.7 E44 1995 [chapters 1-4]

DUE: bring in your Fieldnotes based on any “cultural scenes” you observed on *three* different visits to your site.

October

6 Audio and Video Recording Techniques II
Labeling, storage, archiving

Read:

*Jackson, Bruce. 1987. “Records.” In *Fieldwork*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. [c.15]

Jennifer Post, et al. *A Manual for Documentation...* [SEM] Music Library Reference non-circ ML 3798 M36

*Emerson et al. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Hillman GN307.7 E44 1995 [chapters 4-7]

DUE Project Report II: Annotate Fieldnotes for three site visits (use “headnotes,” etc.)
Develop questions about your site that can be answered through archival and library research.

10-12 An Ethnography of a Conference: Islam and Popular Culture in Indonesia and Malaysia

The class will observe, record, photograph, and interview participants at the conference and concert (Oct. 11) in lieu of class on October 14

13/14 No class

20 Interpretation and Styles of Written Representation

Read:

*Geertz, Clifford. 1973. “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture” and “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 3-32; 412-454. Hillman GN315 G36

27 SEM conference, no class

DUE: write a 5-page “thick description” of a performance event from your field site.

November

3 Advanced techniques in the lab

DUE Project Report III: List of site visits (5); interviews (5); recorded performance events (1); fieldnotes (5);

10 Writing Culture: Interpretation, Representation, and Claims to Truth

*Marcus, George and Michael M.J. Fischer. 1986. “Ethnography and Interpretive Anthropology.” In *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 17-44.

Clifford, James. 1983. “On Ethnographic Authority.” *Representations* 1(2):118-146.

*Van Maanen, John. 1988. *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Hillman GN307.7 V36

DUE: For your fieldnotes for this week, reflect on questions of authority and power, using specific examples from your field project.

17 Shadows in the Field

Read:

*Barz, Gregory and Timothy Cooley, editors. 1996. *Shadows in the Field*. New York: Oxford University Press. ML3799 S5 1997 [Selections]

24 Research Design and Proposal

Read:

Pzeworski, Adam, and Frank Salomon. 1988. “On the Art of Writing Proposals.” New York: Social Science Research Council. Web version:
http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/art_of_writing_proposals.page

DUE: Draft of final paper

December

1 Workshop on Research Design and Proposal

8 Final Oral Presentations

DUE: Final Projects