

ANT 6766: RESEARCH METHODS IN APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY

Course Objectives:

This course surveys methodology and research design issues in applied cultural anthropology, providing students with a foundation in methodology and preparing them for advanced training and practice in a range of methods. It is intended to serve three related purposes:

- To offer a forum for a seminar-style discussion of epistemological and practical issues involved in anthropological data gathering.
- To provide practical examples and exercises in learning the most commonly-used techniques of anthropological research
- To provide an opportunity to engage in applied research using multiple methods, either individually or in teams.

The range of techniques examined will involve both quantitative and qualitative measurement. Analysis of quantitative data will not be covered; this is focus of other required courses at the M.A. and Ph.D levels.

Key themes will include:

- The importance of skills in assessing and critiquing methods and interpretations in published research reports. Thus typical exercises may include assignments to critique published research articles in major anthropological journals, in terms of their research design and methodology.
- The relationship between qualitative and quantitative data in addressing anthropological research problems, addressing issues of appropriate use of particular approaches, according to the research question.
- Issues of reliability, generalizability, and validity, and how these might be assessed in both qualitative and quantitative inquiry.

Students should expect to learn and/or practice:

- The epistemology and theory of ethnography
- How to define a problem and design a research project, including introduction to funding sources and grant-writing.
- Observational and participatory techniques
- Sampling techniques
- Interview techniques
- Use of archival data
- Survey design
- Basic data analysis techniques
- Research ethics and the IRB process
- Presentation of findings

Depending on the interests and expertise of different faculty members, other methodological approaches may be introduced, e.g. visual research methods, GIS, or computer-assisted analysis.

This course is offered at least annually, and typically each semester. Students are advised to take the class early in their coursework schedule.