

FOUN 098: Spies Like Us

Fall 2013 Tuesday & Thursday, 2:30-3:52 PM Location: BIOL 221

INSTRUCTOR:

Jason Cons

jason.cons@bucknell.edu

570.577.3445 Office: Academic West 340

Office Hours: Monday 1-4 PM and by appointment



The ethnographer is a little like Hermes: a messenger who given methodologies for uncovering the masked, the latent, the unconscious, may even obtain his message through stealth.-- Vincent Crapanzano, "Hermes' Dilemma"

A man [sic] who lives a part, not to others but alone, is exposed to obvious psychological dangers. In itself, the practice of deception is not particularly exacting; it is a matter of experience, of professional expertise, it is a facility most of us can acquire. But while a confidence trickster, a play-actor or a gambler can return from his performance to the ranks of his admirers, the secret agent enjoys no such relief. For him, deception is first a matter of self-defense. He must protect himself not only from without but from within, and against the most natural of impulses....--John Le Carré, The Spy Who Came in From the Cold

Course Overview:

This course invites students to question how we understand the world around us, what constitutes social science knowledge, and how and to what extent researchers are like spies. It will focus on ethnography as an in-depth, hands-on, and qualitative approach to understanding the social, political, and cultural world. Students will explore the ways that ethnographers have interpreted and understood local manifestations of global change and international politics. They will also conduct their own ethnographic research on some aspect of their daily lives and the world around them. Additionally, the course will provide grounding in the transition to college, focusing especially on writing and the writing process.

Foundation Seminar Outcomes and Goals:

The Writing Program aims to develop students' mastery of written language. As a W1 course, this class will include:

1. Recurring instruction in writing
2. Teaching of the writing process: planning, composing, revising, and editing
3. Teaching the importance of expository skills
4. Frequent writing
5. Teaching the use of writing as thinking and as a means of creating and processing knowledge

These criteria for W1 courses are designed to support students' achievement of the learning outcomes for the Writing Program by the time of graduation. These learning outcomes, referred to as Writing Program Outcomes (WPOs), are as follows:

WPO 1: students produce effective written communication in terms of expository skills (i.e., organization, clarity of expression, achieving purposes, and addressing intended audiences) and use of conventions relevant to particular disciplines or genres.

WPO 2: students practice writing as a process that includes planning, composing, revising, and editing; and

WPO 3: students use writing as an instrument for learning.

Course Outcomes and Goals: Upon completion, students will be able to:

- Explain social science concepts such as objective, subjective, data, analysis, epistemology, observation, etc.
- Identify and explain the ways that contingent encounters shape "scientific" knowledge
- Explain and evaluate the links between broad and local processes
- Critically evaluate the relationship between social science research the phenomena it seeks to explain
- Observe and document the social world using ethnographic techniques
- Evaluate and analyze social science research and writing
- Plan, develop, and execute a small-scale, social science research project
- Write meaningfully and analytically about social change and social phenomena
- Demonstrate skills of critical analysis and written and oral communication

Course Policies and Expectations:

As an instructor I expect that students will treat this course with an appropriate degree of professionalism. This means that I expect you to:

- Arrive at class promptly and attend every class session (you should communicate with me about any missed classes *BEFORE* the class in question)
- Be personally responsible for material in any missed classes
- Arrive prepared to talk and engage with course materials
- Follow instructions on assignments and ask clarifying questions if needed
- Take thorough notes in class by hand, refraining from using a laptop (note--if you read materials on a device such as a Kindle or an iPad, you are welcome to bring that to class so long as you do not use it to access the internet)
- Treat your fellow students, the classroom environment, and your professor with respect and professionalism
- Respond respectfully and thoughtfully to feedback from your peers and your instructor

Assignments:

- **Class Participation: 20%**
(*active and respectful participation, informed understandings of readings, leadership in class, completion of low-stakes and in-class writing, etc.*)
- **2 Short Essays: 30%**
(*prompt-based essay evaluating course material*)
- **Reading Responses (10): 10%**
(*1 Page discussions of readings complete with a discussion question posted online by noon the day of class (post-facto reading responses will not count towards your total number of required responses)*)
- **Final Paper: 40%**
(*10-15 page ethnography. Your grade includes not just the final product, but all aspects of writing and planning this project.*)

Course Format:

A Foundation Seminar is somewhat different than a regular course. It covers a range of topics both academic and non or indirectly academic. It requires a significant amount of writing. And it demands student engagement.

This course will be primarily, though not exclusively, organized as a discussion course, and will require students to come prepared to work with whatever materials the instructor may provide. This course is also based on an extended research project carried out over the course of the semester. You will be regularly workshopping ideas and discussing progress in writing within the course. As such, this course will further require that you become comfortable in sharing with and evaluating your peers. This will require a generous spirit and a critical eye, as well as an ability to sideline your own ego in the service of learning from those around you.

Additional information and support:

This is a writing intensive class. We will cover expectations and strategies as we work. You may also want to take advantage of the Bucknell Writing Center (<http://www.bucknell.edu/x1342.xml>) to support you in your work. Also, my own advice and expectations for students writing in my classes can be found on my website: <http://www.jasoncons.net/for-students.html>.

Bucknell University Honor Code:

As a student and citizen of the Bucknell University community:

1. I will not lie, cheat or steal in my academic endeavors.
2. I will forthrightly oppose each and every instance of academic dishonesty.
3. I will communicate directly and promptly with any person or persons I believe to have been dishonest in academic work.
4. I will let my conscience guide my decision on reporting breaches of academic integrity to the appropriate faculty or deans.

Bucknell University expectations for academic engagement:

“Courses at Bucknell that receive one unit of academic credit have a minimum expectation of 12 hours per week of student academic engagement. Student academic engagement includes both the hours of direct faculty instruction (or its equivalent) and the hours spent on out of class student work. Half and quarter unit courses at Bucknell should have proportionate expectations for student engagement.”

Academic Responsibility:

Please, review Bucknell’s policies regarding:

Academic Integrity:

<http://www.bucknell.edu/x1340.xml>

Avoiding Plagiarism:

<http://www.bucknell.edu/x1341.xml>

Unauthorized Collaboration:

<http://www.bucknell.edu/x1344.xml>

Bucknell Resources for Research & Writing:

<http://www.bucknell.edu/x1342.xml>

Email Policy:

Please, feel free to contact me. However, please also keep in mind that I am as busy as you. Make sure you consult the course syllabus, other handouts, and the course Moodle site BEFORE sending an e-mail. Note that e-mail should NOT be seen as an alternative to meeting with me during office hours. Nor should e-mail be used as a mechanism to receive private tutorials or to explain material that was covered in classes you missed (those are your responsibility to obtain from your peers). I will endeavor to respond within 24 hours.

Moodle and Required Texts:

Most of the readings for this course will be posted on Moodle. This is also where you will submit papers, reading responses, etc. Additionally, students should purchase copies of:

- Sacco, J. *The Fixer and Other Stories*
- Ehrenreich, B. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*
- Van Maanen, J. *Tales from the Field: On Writing Ethnography*
- Kapuscinski, R. *Shah of Shahs*
- Wolf, M. *Thrice-Told Tales: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility*
- Reding, N. *Methland: The Death and Life of an American Small Town*
- One Moleskine notebook.
- Optional: Rabinow, P. *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*

These texts are available at the Campus Bookstore and at various outlets online

Saturday, August 24: Course Introduction--Spies, Researchers, and Observers

Thursday, August 29: What do spying and research have in common?

- Le Carré, John. 2008 (September 29). "The Madness of Spies." *The New Yorker*.
- Mills, C. Wright. 1959. "The Promise." *The Sociological Imagination*.
- Price, D. 2002. "Interlopers and Invited Guests: On Anthropology's Witting and Unwitting Links to Intelligence Agencies." *Anthropology Today*. Vo. 18, No. 6.

Tuesday, September 3: The "culture" of the American Liberal Arts Academy

- Roosevelt, Max. 2009 (February 18). "Student Expectations Seen as Causing Grade Disputes." *The New York Times*.
- Schwartz, Martin. 2008. "The Importance of Stupidity in Scientific Research." *Journal of Cell Research*. 121.
- Burger, Edward. 2012 (August 21). "Essay on the Importance of Teaching Failure." *Inside Higher Ed*.
- The SIGJ2 Writing Collective. 2012. "What Can We Do? The Challenge of Being New Academics in Neoliberal Universities." *Antipode*. Vol. 44 (2).

Writing Assignment 1 Distributed

Thursday, September 5: Watching and Listening

- Film: *The Lives of Others (Das Leben der Anderen)* [available on Moodle]
- Hjortshoj, K. 2009. "How Good Writing Gets Written." In *The Transition to College Writing*.

Writing Assignment 1 Due on Moodle by 10 AM

Tuesday September 10: Being There (part 1)

- Geertz, C. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*.

Thursday, September 12: Being There (part 2)

- Bourgois, P. and J. Schomberg. 2009. "Intimate Apartheid." In *Righteous Dopefiend*

Tuesday, September 17: Getting Sucked in (Against Objectivity)

- Buford, B. "Turin." In *Among the Thugs*

Thursday, September 19: The "Participant" in Participant Observation

- Ehrenreich, B. 2001. "Serving in Florida." In *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*.

Writing Assignment 2 Distributed

Tuesday, September 24: Writing and Revision

- Hjortshoj, K. 2009. "Footstools and Furniture: Variations of Form and Flow in College Writing." In *The Transition to College Writing*.
- Graff, G. and C. Birkenstein. 2010. "As He Himself Puts It: The Art of Quoting." In *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*.

Writing Assignment 2 Due on Moodle by 10 AM. Print and bring 2 Copies to class.

Thursday, September 26: The People You Know, part 1: Ethnographic meetings, research outcomes

- Sacco, J. 2009. *The Fixer*.
- Turner, V. 1967. "Muchona the Hornet: Interpreter of Religions." In *The Forest of Symbols: On Some Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*.

Tuesday, October 1: The People You Know, part 2: Contingency and social science knowledge

- Cons, J. 2014. "Field Dependencies: Mediation, Addiction, and Anxious Fieldwork at the India-Bangladesh Border." *Ethnography*
- Middleton, T. and E. Pradhan. 2014. "Dynamic Duos: On Partnership and the Possibilities of Postcolonial Ethnography." *Ethnography*.
- Hoffman, D. and M. Tarawalley. 2014. "Frontline Collaborations: The Research Relationship in Unstable Places." *Ethnography*.

Thursday, October 3: Framing a Project

- Van Maanan, J. 2011. "Fieldwork, Culture, Ethnography." In *Tales from the Field: On Writing Ethnography*

Tuesday, October 8: Ethnographic Voice, part 1: writing and finding a voice in other people's stories

- Van Maanan, J. 2011. Chapters 3-5. In *Tales from the Field: On Writing Ethnography*

Proposal for your Final Research Project Due. Bring a copy to class

Thursday, October 10: The Craft of Writing Ethnography, part 1: nuts and bolts

- Emerson, et. al. 2011. "Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research." In *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.

Library Visit

Tuesday, October 15: Fall Break, No Class

Thursday, October 17: Ethnographic Voice, part 2: Voices of confusion

- Nordstrom, C. 1995. "War on the Front Lines." In *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*.

First ethnographic observation due.

Tuesday, October 22: Ethnographic Voice, part 3: The *Rashomon* effect

- Wolf, M. 1992. Chapters 2-4 (lightly skim chapter 3). In *A Thrice Told Tale: Feminism, Postmodernism, and Ethnographic Responsibility*.

Thursday, October 24: Ethnographic Locations, part 1: Description beyond sight

- Stoler, P. 1989. "Signs in the Social Order: Riding a Songhay Bush Taxi." In *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology*.

Second ethnographic observation due.

Tuesday, October 29: Ethnographic Locations, part 2: Narrating violence

- Pachirat, T. 2011. "Kill Floor." In *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*.

Third ethnographic observation due

Thursday, October 31: The Craft of Writing Ethnography, part 2: Assembling the nuts and bolts

- Emerson, et. al. 2011. "Writing an Ethnography." In *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.

Narrative outline of final paper due on Moodle at 10:00 AM

Tuesday, November 5: Ethnographic Locations, part 3: Visualizing conflict

- Film. 2010. *Restrepo*. [Available on Moodle].

Thursday, November 7: Ethnographic Locations, part 4: Rethinking grand events

- Kapuscinski, R. 1982. *Shah of Shahs*.

Tuesday, November 12: The Craft of Writing Ethnography, part 3: Reflections from a master

- Rabinow, P. 2007. Selections from *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*.

Thursday, November 14: Writing Workshop

Rough draft of final ethnography due on Moodle.

Tuesday, November 19: Ethnography and Global Change 1

- Reding, N. 2009. Prologue and Part 1. *Methland: The Death and Life of an American Small Town*.

Thursday, November 21: Class Canceled--Instructor Out of Town

Tuesday, November 26: Ethnography and Global Change 2

- Reding, N. 2009. Part 2. *Methland: The Death and Life of an American Small Town*.

Thursday, November 28: NO CLASS, Thanksgiving Recess

Tuesday, December 3: Ethnography and Global Change 3

- Reding, N. 2009. Part 3, Epilogue, and Afterward. *Methland: The Death and Life of an American Small Town*.

Thursday, December 5: Class Presentations

Tuesday, 10: Class Presentations

Final Paper Due on Moodle at by 2:30