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SYLLABUS – Cultural Documentation Field Lab

Course Number: CSP 610
Credits: 1.5
Semester: Fall 2018
Instructor: Lisa Rathje, PhD
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Virtual Office Hours: By appointment via WebEx. To schedule, send email 24 hours in advance with two potential times that work for you to meet. I will respond to all emails with a confirmation and time.

Course Description

…the relation of narrative to its object…. How can we describe something? What relation does description bear to ideology and the very invention of that "something"? (Susan Stewart, On Longing ix)

The Cultural Documentation Field Lab provides students with a structured environment to apply methods and theories presented in CSP 610 to their own semester-long field research projects, culminating in a in-depth report. The instructor will maintain an active mentorship role, and will be available for group and individual consultation both at stipulated times and by appointment throughout the semester.

In this class, the process is very important. There will be an emphasis on planning and project management to encourage a thoughtful approach to all aspects of your documentation project. The final report should provide transparency relative to your process, offer a coherent narrative that you have constructed based upon your critical interpretation of your research, and offer an opportunity for multiple voices/perspectives within the community to be heard/seen/recognized.

The class is organized into four Modules: Planning, Fieldwork, Synthesis, and Reporting. Over the duration of the class students will: develop a research plan and complete an IRB training module; conduct field research using cultural documentation methods appropriate to their project; collate data and synthesize significant themes and critical points for discussion; and develop a final report to share this discussion through your documentation.

Throughout the class students will be required to use the online course space to: discuss challenges encountered while undertaking their research; share field data with one another as appropriate; and present documentary materials (photographs, audio, video) for peer review.

Course Goals

- To facilitate the planning, execution and reporting of student-developed cultural documentation projects.
- To apply theories, refine skills, and explore ethical issues presented to CSP 610.
- To assist students in generating work that can address their larger programmatic and professional goals.
- To provide an online learning environment for students to explore collaboratively the challenges, methods, and outcomes and cultural documentation work.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- Formulate a greater understanding of the processes involved in conducting cultural documentation research.
- Improve skills using the technological tools employed in cultural documentation research.
- Understand through direct experience the vital ethical considerations inherent in cultural documentation research and in the creation of ethnographic representations from the research.

Course Structure

The Cultural Documentation Field Lab is structured around your independent fieldwork project. The four modules are designed to help you manage your project. *The instructor will accept all work until the date noted for the assignment.* No late work will be accepted without prior instructor approval. Just as all professionals have either grant deadlines, project contract dates, or relationships built on trust that things will be completed as outlined, part of your grade will be dependent upon you fulfilling assignments in a timely manner and anticipating that, in the field, things can take more time than first allotted.   This makes the planning for your project even more important.

1) **Planning:** In weeks 1 and 2 of the course, students will focus on generating a structured documentation research proposal and learning about IRB protocol. Draft one will be peer-reviewed. The instructor will comment on and evaluate the revised draft. Once the instructor has approved research proposals, in weeks 3 and 4 students will begin to coordinate their field sites.
2) **Fieldwork:** In weeks 4-9 students will focus on conducting their fieldwork. Each week students will be expected to submit fieldnotes to the instructor covering each field experience. In addition, students will be expected to upload short samples of their fieldwork to VoiceThread, a cloud-based collaborative site. You will also be expected to provide peer review of the field materials uploaded to VoiceThread.

3) **Synthesis:** In weeks 9-11 students should finish the process of reviewing material; creating logs with indexes of images, audio recordings and video recordings to facilitate the identification of key themes and critical questions related to their research project. Additional selected transcripts will be necessary for most projects.
4) **Reporting:** Students will use their documentary materials and notes to create an in-depth report of data collected.

Description of Assignments:

Peer Review: There are three specific assignments that ask students to participate in providing thoughtful review and constructive critiques of their peer's work. Two reviews will consist of written posts on the course discussion board regarding the research proposal and posts on identified research themes.   In the Research proposal post, students will aim to assist the submitter in organizing her/his ideas and plans, and in crafting a stronger proposal that can be completed in the allotted time. The VoiceThread reviews will consist of oral and/or written comments via VoiceThread that specifically discuss: 1) Appropriateness of the documentary format to the cultural form under consideration, 2) technical qualities of the submitted materials, and 3) effectiveness of the researcher in the documentary situation. The themes assignment will ask students to assist their peers in articulating significant themes and narratives in their projects.

Research Proposal: Create a 2-3 page documentation research proposal. There are a number of components that will be required (much of this may be taken from your Site Report submitted in your CSP 610 residency course):

a) Brief narrative describing the people and places you plan to include in your documentation. Some questions to guide your writing include:

~Name the three people you intend to interview and describe why they are included in this documentation project.

~Describe any significant sites, traditions, performances that you will need to include in your documentation to provide a fuller context for this project.

~What context do these three people and the identified places/events share? NOTE: The documentation for field lab must include a shared cultural context. Unrelated documentation items will not be accepted as a part of your final report.

~Why do you have access to these individuals and sites?

~Also, tell why you've selected this community for your project—how did you learn about this community? How much do you know about them prior to starting your research?

b) Description of what approach you intend to take to your documentation project (i.e. your methodology).

~To the best of your ability, try to briefly discuss the point of your documentation. What objective do you hope to accomplish? What is your guiding research question?

~What outside source(s) are informing your research question and process?

~What kind of documentation do you intend to do and what equipment will you use for your documentation?

~ Give examples of kinds of questions you will be looking to answer—either through interview(s) or other documentary means. (In other words, provide a short sample of your interview protocol in the narrative that will be expanded upon in your appendix.)

~Note if there are language, race, gender or other factors that will concern you in the field research. How will your methodology account for this?

~ Describe what potential ethical issues will be involved with your work. How do you plan to approach this work in an ethical manner?

 ~How will you describe this project and its purpose to the members of the community?

c) Timeline for completion of research (be as specific as possible with exact dates/benchmarks, number of visits, etc. Remember this is a 1.5 credit course! Be sure that what you propose is realistic.)

APPENDICES (these can be in addition to the 2-3 page limit):

1)   Suggested Interview Protocol, including your proposed introduction to the project that you will share with participants (either orally or through writing), a question set that will inform the interviews, and any other details that will inform the way in which you will conduct the interview.

2)   Bibliography (include sources that inform both research methods, theoretical frame, and site-specific texts if available)

3) Completed Release Form, customized for your project.

The rubric for grading these papers will include:

~Questions addressed appropriately and thoroughly in body of paper.

~Paper used **AND PROPERLY CITED** outside sources (drawn from CSP 610 or other MACS courses) to support your answers to these questions. You must demonstrate an understanding of qualitative research methodology and documentation as presented in other courses.

~Appropriateness of proposed documentary formats to desired project outcomes.

~Organization and grammar appropriate for graduate-level writing.

NOTE: Students will have to resubmit proposals deemed to have low feasibility of being completed in available time or that have incomplete and/or problematic research protocol. No project will move past this step of the course until they are approved by the instructor.

The Institutional Review Board: Goucher research projects and activities that involve human subjects that are conducted on the college premises or elsewhere by faculty, students, or employees require review and approval by the Institutional Review Board prior to initiation. Research that is conducted as part of a classroom assignment *may not* need IRB approval. Please see Goucher College's Policy on the Use of Human Subjects [http://www.goucher.edu/legal-counsel/all-policies-and-procedures-a-z/policy-on-the-use-of-human-subjects] for details.

Federal regulations now require that every IRB member, researcher, and key personnel of a research team certify knowledge of federal regulations and policies dealing with human subjects. The Goucher College Policy on the Use of Human Subjects requires IRB members, researchers, and key personnel of all research teams to submit certificates of completion of a free web-based training course to the IRB with IRB submissions. This course is available here: http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php.

Please save your certificate as a pdf so that you may keep it for your own records and include it in IRB submissions. For this course you will be required to submit this pdf to the instructor before any research in the field is completed.

For more information, visit: http://www.goucher.edu/legal-counsel/all-policies-and-procedures-a-z/institutional-review-board

Review of documentation materials: Students are asked to review a collection of documentation materials and present a short (1 page) report of the material including: 1) observations regarding the quality of the documentation (technical qualities), 2) observations regarding the organizing conventions used (naming

conventions, finding aides), and 3) observations regarding usefulness of materials available. Include in the title the name and location of the collection. I would recommend that you use one of the collections available digitally through the Library of Congress: http://www.loc.gov/folklife/onlinecollections.html. I am also willing to entertain other student ideas of a collection, but please check in with me before doing a report using an alternative collection.

Student Readings: One short reading (a chapter or article-length) reading will be assigned to each student. A short 5-10 minute presentation will be given via zoom on the reading. The student presentation must effectively summarize the reading and present a critical consideration of the content.

Fieldnotes, Due weekly while in field While students are conducting research they are required to generate fieldnotes that document all research encounters that are relevant to their project. Fieldnotes are to be submitted to the instructor on a weekly basis through Goucher Learn and will not be shared with the class without the expressed permission of the author. Grammar and writing quality will not be part of the their evaluation, although comprehensibility of writing is crucial. Rather, fieldnotes will be evaluated according to how descriptive and informative they are of the student's work and the site, how effectively they contextualize choices made by the student, and how reflective they are upon the nature of fieldwork and the student's experiences undertaking it.

Field Materials Presentation PART ONE: Students will be expected to share via VoiceThread a presentation consisting of representative field materials as described below. This presentation must include:
1) 8-10 photos you have taken at your fieldwork site. Please only put one photo per Voice Thread slide. These photos must include at least one of the following:
    a. A Wide-Angle image that shows the person, place, or object in their larger context
    b. A Detail image that provides an up-close look at a person, place, or object
    c. An image that includes something that you would consider a symbol at the field site.
    d. An image that could help a viewer see the "culture" of your field site.
2) An in-depth caption for each photo included in your Voice Thread. This caption may be written or spoken using the "commenting" feature of Voice Thread.
3) The final slide of your VoiceThread needs to include your own self-evaluation. It may be presented as a video, audio, or written text. Questions you should ask yourself include:
    a. How are the materials you collected "useful"?
    b. What is your favorite part of this collection and/or your documentation experience so far?
    c. What do you want to improve upon when you return to the field?

To receive full points these presentations will include:
~Exactly the required media elements, captions, and self-evaluations as described in the assignment.
~High quality documentary materials for presentation.
~High quality and thoughtful captions, descriptions, and analysis that clearly connects to student research goals and the objectives of cultural documentation.
Field Materials Presentation PART TWO: Create new VoiceThread with an additional selection of field materials from a later site visit that incorporates feedback and critique received on first set. 8-10 images with captions are required. This presentation must also include an unedited video or audio sample (2-3 min max.) The final slide should again include your own self-evaluation.

 Post on significant themes and narratives: This post will be a short (2-3 pages) paper that will outline the themes, symbols, and/or narratives that the student has identified as significant over the course of completing fieldwork. To receive full points, this post must include:
1) At least 2-3 themes that are explicitly identified and written out.
2) Evidence that the student used their fieldnotes and knowledge of the media collected to identify these themes. To show that these themes were derived directly from your fieldwork and research, describe AND CITE USING LOGGED MEDIA NAMES/NUMBERS what media includes these elements.
3) Critically think about and then describe the different ways different media may illuminate your identified themes. I will expect a clear connection between collected media and themes in this paper—each theme should be supported by at least two cited media sources—images, video, or audio.
4) Also, describe if you shared your ideas for the significant themes with your community? If yes, do they resonate for the community?

The rubric for grading these proposals will include:
~Questions addressed appropriately and thoroughly in body of paper.
~Critical thinking evident in discussion of content and material. Clear synthesis of multi-layered materials gathered from good ethnographic research work in field.
~Organization and grammar appropriate for graduate-level writing.

Transcripts or equivalent: Students will submit a minimum five pages of transcripts or an equivalent document approved by the instructor a minimum of a week in advance. These transcripts should showcase especially those stories and narratives that directly relate to student identified themes. The transcripts can be from one interview, or sections of different interviews. All transcripts should be clearly labeled, using the file naming system that will be consistent with their logs. Format and any editorial decisions made by the student must be clear.

The rubric for grading these proposals will include:
~Student meets minimum pages of content required for assignment.
~Transcripts show a relation to student identified themes.

~Time code, speaker identification, and grammar are clear and appropriate relative to the recorded material being transcribed.

Log Forms and cover sheet: Students will submit completed Log Forms (available for download from Goucher Learn) for all documentary media generated during their research. Creation of Logs will familiarize students with the content of their research materials and provide them with a useful resource to facilitate access to them—for their work in this class, for future projects, and ultimately, for their future use by the communities with which they worked and other interested researchers.

To receive full points on this assignment the student must include the following three components in their submission:

1) Completed Log Forms for all documentary media generated during their research.
2) A cover sheet (one page) will also accompany the log forms with a table of contents listing all media that follows in your logs. This cover sheet should at a minimum also include names of people interviewed, places, and/or events documented. It should also contain a list of key words. Writing must be clear, but it may be written informally (i.e. lists, outlines, short paragraphs will all be acceptable).
3) Screen shots of logged materials from computer, similar to examples shared by the instructor in Goucher Learn.

The rubric for grading these papers will include:
~Detailed logs are completed for all documentary material that has been generated.
~Cover sheet shows evidence of synthesis between all logged material.
~Screen shots corroborate organization methods found in logs.

Final Report, Due to the dropbox on GoucherLearn or some other pre-approved location (i.e. wetransfer)—By week 14 all students will complete and submit the final version of their research report. In each of the preceding parts of this assignment sequence, students have employed kinds of writing, presentation, and thinking that will be useful in this part as well. So **you should think of this final report not as something separate from what you have been doing, but as a natural progression that enables you to utilize all the skills you have been practicing up to this point**. In this product a combination of analysis, narrative, data, and theory should all be evident.

The report should include the following elements:
Report
Introduction
Methodology
Statement regarding ethical considerations
Scope of Research

Identified themes and significant narratives
Limits of Current Research
Recommendations for future research

Field Notes
These may be organized chronologically, or by subject; i.e. Interviews, Places, Events

Appendices
Bibliography
Index to media (includes Log Form Cover sheet, ALL Log Forms, and screen shots of logged materials on your computer)
Selected transcripts

Note regarding media: I encourage you to reference your own media extensively throughout the report. Use the logged file names in your citation: (i.e. 2011.TAS.LR.02) I also encourage you to include photos in your report, if available (aim for ~5-8 photos), and to provide access to some of the audio of video clips via soundcloud or vimeo (providing the link in your report). All photos should be compressed in your report to reduce file size (DO NOT compress the originals). You may wish to consider saving your report as a pdf to ensure that formatting is not made strange when you submit.

The rubric to receive full points on these projects will include:
~Includes all of the categories above and presents thoughtful discussion within these categories, clearly engaging with course objectives.
~Demonstrates your understanding and appropriate handling of ethics, audience, and content.
~Shows clear revisions that incorporate peer and instructor comments as appropriate on earlier material submitted in the course; including themes, logs, and transcriptions.
~Shows evidence of community's perspective on the cultural practices documented.
~Good technical qualities of final product in all media selected. Additionally, media included in final report is appropriately cited and made available as appropriate.
~NO POINTS WILL BE AWARDED TO THE FINAL PAPER IF COPIES OF THE RELEASE FORMS ARE NOT ALSO SUBMITTED TO THE INSTRUCTOR.

Grading: In this class, students can earn a total of 100 points. These 100 points are divided up across all four class Modules.
Module 1:
      Research proposal: 10 pts
      Peer Review responses to research proposal: 5 pts
      Review of Documentation Materials: 5 pts
Module 2:
      Field materials presentations and short reading presentation: 5 pts each, for a total of 15 pts
      Fieldnotes: 10 pts

Peer Review responses to field materials presentation: 5 pts

Module 3:
Log forms and cover: 10 pts
Themes post: 10 pts
Transcripts: 5 pts
Peer Review responses to themes post: 5 pts

Module 4: Final Report: 20 pts

Grade Scale

A	= 93 or more points		C+	= 77 to 79 points
A-	= 90 to 92 points		C	= 73 to 76 points
B+	= 87 to 89 points		C-	= 70 to 72 points
B	= 83 to 86 points		D	= 60 to 69 points
B-	= 80 to 82 points		F	= 59 points and below

Course Policies

Communication:

- Faculty will be available at their Goucher email address and will respond to queries within 24-48 hours.
- Course participants are responsible for maintaining continuous involvement with faculty, fellow students and student groups. In particular, participation in all online discussions is required. Ongoing communication allows you to gain deeper insights into the content, activities and assignments in the course. Please give notice of any obstacle that prevents this.
- You are encouraged to ask questions whenever information needs clarifying.
- For questions pertaining to your assignments: send an email directly to the instructor (please do not post personal questions on the discussion board).
- For questions about assignments that may be interesting and helpful to other class members: please use the discussion board.
- For problems with technical aspects of the website: contact helpdesk@goucher.edu (you may copy the instructor).

Missed Work:
You are responsible for material covered in the course. It is your sole responsibility to obtain any materials missed.

Late Policy:
For proper graduate student learning to occur, pacing of content mastery is critical. Therefore, assignments are to be completed on time. If extreme circumstances prevent an assignment to be completed in a timely fashion, please notify me before the assignment is due so a new date can be negotiated. I do not allow "redo's" of the work. Please ensure that your best work is submitted on or before the due date.

Academic Integrity:

All final work products are to be the independent work of each student and stored in the electronic portfolio. Suspected violations of the Honor Code will be referred to the Academic Honor Board. For a full description of the code and what constitutes a violation of the code, refer to the Goucher Handbook or online at www.goucher.edu/x1292.xml.

Disability Support:
http://www.goucher.edu/academics/academic-support/disability-support-services