Rationale:
Interest and issues in qualitative methods have burgeoned in the past two decades. This course taps the excitement and dilemmas that researchers are experiencing. The syllabus is designed around conducting fieldwork, interviewing, and interpretive analysis. At the same time, the course surveys theories, traditions, ethics, analytics, and current issues and trajectories in qualitative research.

Objectives:

- Gain familiarity with the methodological approaches in ethnographically-informed fieldwork
- Understand methodological issues and research directions in humanistic qualitative research

Required texts:

Recommended:

*Qualitative analysis is addressed to the task of delineating forms, kinds and types of social phenomena; of documenting in loving detail the things that exist* (Lofland, 1971, p. 13).

Assignments

Paper #1: Proposal & IRB application
Draft a proposal for observational work including issues of access and consent forms. Your proposal should be based on your initial reconnaissance work in a particular field site. Include a completed IRB form:
http://www.mtu.edu/research/administration/integrity-compliance/review-boards/human-subjects/IRB-tutorial.html
You must complete the CITI training for students before you submit your application to the IRB.
Paper #2: Book review
Choose one of the titles approved for this assignment. Read a full-length qualitative study and write a 4-page review. Your review should offer a fair and succinct overview of the contents and evaluate the methodological soundness of the study.

Paper #3: Interviews
Conduct field interviews and write up both the interview process and analysis detailing your research choices including those you made as you prepared the transcripts.

Interview transcript
Transcribe at least one of your interviews verbatim. You should indicate long pauses and nonfluencies but you need not indicate inflections or turns.

Paper #4: Learning in/from the field
Write a brief, confessional account of your fieldwork, focusing on specific moments of confusion/surprise/uncertainty that contributed to your understanding of the social scene.

Paper #5: Final paper
Develop some aspect of the social life you have observed in your field observations. Draw on our readings and your fieldwork to flesh out your methodological description. Turn in your fieldwork portfolio and interview transcripts as well.

Fieldwork portfolio
You must document a minimum of 15 hours in the field and all of your notes for your fieldwork and interviews. Keep a portfolio with your in-field notes, written fieldnotes, a field diary, initial coding and analytic notes, interview transcript, and your reflections on your field experiences.

Course Policies

*Plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students so carefully document any sources. Note that plagiarism includes paraphrasing others’ work — even if you rephrase what someone else said, you are plagiarizing unless you give full credit to your source. Please familiarize yourself with MTU’s policy on academic integrity: http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html

I encourage you to contact me about any questions or suggestions. In addition, please see me about any particular accommodations in accordance with MTU’s ADA policy:

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (72212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action office (7-3310).