

Ethnographic Video Project

Project description

We spend the semester considering how music and musical activity play different social, political, and economic roles around the world. The same things happen in your own backyard.

In this semester-long project, you and your group will create an ethnographic video of a musical activity in your community. This will be a fieldwork project, requiring you to combine library research with interviews, observation, and participation in a slice of musical life. You will propose a project, then research, participate in, analyze, and document a musical activity. You will have plenty of scaffolding and support in completing the steps of this project and you will learn about fieldwork methods used in anthropology and ethnomusicology.

Finally, you will submit a short essay that outlines your contribution and thoughts on the project and ethnographic process.

Objectives

Through this project, you will:

- Compare, interpret, and analyze a variety of works within their cultural context and analyze how they function as a reflection of human practice;
- Analyze the conflicts, opportunities, and differences between groups of people in your chosen community;
- Formulate your own questions and ideas based on the synthesis of information from a variety of sources, especially from your first-person encounters with your chosen community; and
- Practice the disciplinary requirements of musicology, anthropology, and ethnomusicology through fieldwork.

Stages and Directions

This is a long-term project that requires a multi-step process. Each stage has its own deadlines, listed in the Blackboard menu item.

FIELDWORK METHODS SESSION

In order to become familiar with how fieldwork research and ethnographic writing works, you will complete an introduction to the methodology. This will be in person, through a synchronous video session, or through asynchronous lectures depending on the semester's enrollment numbers and where everyone is located. More specifics for each semester will be on Blackboard.

This material will give you an introduction to what fieldwork is and some ideas on different ways in which you can approach your topic. This will help you prepare and outline expectations. Some interview techniques and other general tips will help you get started. We will also discuss what I mean by "musical community" and what types of analysis serve as valid approaches to a topic.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

After giving some thought and completing preliminary research on a topic, your group will write a proposal to continue your work in that direction. This proposal will demonstrate that you have a clear and feasible idea. It will give the graduate mentor and I an opportunity to confirm for you that the idea is specific enough for quality analysis and that you have the resources to succeed.

Your proposal will include the following sections:

- **Topic:** Clearly introduce the community and music that you would like to research. Give specific information on who and what you will be working with.
- **Argument or questions:** Articulate the questions that you hope to answer throughout your research. These should be specific enough to successfully analyze, but broad enough to be interesting to those outside of the community (your readers). For example, what music a yoga studio uses for meditation practices might not be particularly interesting (even to those who are meditating), but how different practitioners and participants respond to a variety of meditative musics when at the studio or at home may speak to why certain sounds work better than others (or none at all). Be warned: your questions and hypotheses will change as you do the research. This is fine, but you need a clear starting point. You will need to make the graduate mentor or me aware of any major diversions from your proposal. If you have any questions, just ask.
- **Methodology:** Describe how you will do the research to explore these questions, including any specific roles by different group members. Will you be participants? What will you be doing? Who will you interview? How will you find other people to interview? What types of questions will you be asking? Are you dealing with musicians only, or others? Who and how will you find them? If this work focuses on a specific place (church, nursing home, rehearsal venue, etc.), do you have access? How will you gain it? Are you recording the music for later analysis? How about video of what people are doing? Do you need/have permission? Equipment? What other hindrances are there and how do you plan to overcome them? Who is doing what?
- **Analysis:** Outline the evidence that you need to prove your argument and how will you get it. What forms of analysis are you going to use? Those who have training in music theory may want to analyze music for form and content, for example. Others may focus on what people do and say, how they demonstrate their musical identities or activities.
- **Annotated bibliography:** This will be at least three items and include one book on the topic and one documentary that will model your video's structure. Explain what each says and why it is helpful. You can include a website for your third source, but it must be reputable and not from a user-edited source like Wikipedia. If you have something that is questionable, ask. If you need advice on a book, ask. The documentary will cover music and you will use it as a model for your video's structure. This does not have to be directly related to your topic, but you will describe how the documentary uses video to introduce its argument, completes its analysis of the music and community, and tells an overall narrative within in the annotation.
- **Three self-imposed deadlines:** Give three important dates for your research. These are things that you have already scheduled, including interviews, concerts, rehearsals or meetings that you will attend, and deadlines for the steps of your work.

There is no minimum or maximum word count for the proposal. Some groups may be able to get their ideas clearly stated in two pages while others need five. You can formulate these sections using bulleted lists or paragraph narratives, or a mix. Do what best (most clearly) articulates your thoughts

and plans. If your proposal does not follow a single, clear process through the project, take the opportunity to revise your idea. If you have any questions or would like to discuss your proposal before submitting, contact me.

You will submit your proposal through a Turnitin link in Blackboard.

SELF-REFLECTIVE FIELDWORK ESSAY

At this point, you can begin thinking about your essay response. It will be short and you will not share it with your group. The 500-word essay will be due at the same time as the group project's final submission. Your essay will:

- Describe your personal take on the final project and your thoughts about its success (which will be difficult to do early, but begin thinking about it);
- Outline your contribution to the group, which will be graded and may (in the case of dispute or other issues) be checked against other group members' essays and peer evaluation responses;
- Analyze your thoughts on the ethnographic research process. Describe how you encountered your fieldwork topic, how you felt entering into the community, and what changes you saw (if any) in your own musical behavior during the process. This should be self-reflective, in both personal and analytical terms.

This essay should follow these guidelines for full credit:

- It is not necessary to supplement the class materials, but if you need to do further research to make your point clearly and persuasively, use a standard and consistent method of citation and include a bibliography.
- Check and recheck your spelling and grammar.
- Be sure that your essay makes an overall argument about your experience with fieldwork. Introduce your perspective and return to it in your conclusion.

When your group project is finished—and before the posted deadline—submit your essay through the Turnitin link for inclusion in your final project grade.

FINAL VIDEO SUBMISSION

The final stage involves your preparation for final submission. When your group has put together a draft of the final product, whomever did the editing should upload it to your discussion group for everyone else to see. This can be done in many ways, but two are easiest for our purposes:

- From within a new thread, the group member can choose "Mashups" in Blackboard's text editor and select "Kultura Media." From here, you have the ability to add media using the button. This keeps your content within the Blackboard site so that only course members can view it.
- You can also upload to YouTube or a similar page and provide a link. Not all services allow you to create private videos, so this gives you less control. *I do not recommend this process for drafts*, but I will accept it for your final submission since it will allow you to share your work with others outside of the course.

Group members should all take the time to review the project and make any suggestions for revision. Remember that re-editing video takes a long time, so any major changes should be accompanied by an offer to help out or otherwise alleviate the difficulty of video editing. Once you are satisfied, your group will make your final submission.

To finalize your project, you will need three tasks complete:

1. One group member will submit the project by posting it to the final submission discussion board. This is not a group board: it is for the entire class. Create a new thread, give a description of your group's project, and embed the video using Kultura (as describe above), YouTube, or whatever process your group chooses. This is the final submission for your project and allows your peers across the class to view your work.
2. Complete and submit your individual essay as described above using the Turnitin link.
3. Complete and submit the peer assessment using the link.
4. Write five multiple choice questions about your video and email them to me for use in the final quiz.

This project is the most interactive one of our semester. Be sure to contact me with any questions regarding equipment, technology, directions, group member issues, or other issues that may pop up as you go through the process of creating your music video.

There is no extra credit for this project. Grades will be based on your individual essay, group project, and peer assessments. The score breakdown is as follows:

Proposal Submission: 20%

Full credit	Half credit	No credit	Maximum Available
Topic			5
Clearly introduced topic with specifics and background of who you will be working with.	Topic is unclear or unspecific.	Does not give a general overview of the research topic.	5
Argument			5
Articulates research questions that are appropriate and feasible for this project.	Research questions are not well defined or articulate, or are either too broad or specific to be feasible.	Research questions and argument are absent or poorly articulated.	5
Methodology			5
Methodology is clear, specific, and feasible, obviously well considered. Group member roles are clearly articulated.	Methodology is general, insufficient, or has problems of feasibility.	Proposal does not clearly or sufficiently address methodology.	5
Annotated Bibliography			3
Bibliography includes at least three sources, one of which is a book and one of which is a journal article. Annotations are concise and the journal article annotation addresses the structure of the writing.	Bibliography fails to complete all requirements.	There is no bibliographic material given.	3
Self-Imposed Deadlines			2
Proposal gives three self-imposed and feasible deadlines.	(N/A: only giving one or two deadlines will result in no credit)	Proposal does not give three deadlines, or the deadlines are not feasible.	2

Self-Reflective Fieldwork Essay: 20%

10 points	5 points	0 points	Maximum Available
Submission analyzes your work with the group's project in terms of your own experience with the fieldwork.	Submission provides moderate insight into your perspective on your group's efforts.	There is no attempt to discuss and critique your own group's work.	10
Submission clearly outlines your contribution to the group's project with specific details and demonstrates significant effort and collaboration.	Submission vaguely outlines your contribution to the group project and/or your contribution shows moderate effort and collaboration.	Submission does not provide insight into your contribution to the group project or your effort was minimal.	10

Final Video Submission: 50%

Full credit	Half credit	No credit	Maximum Available
Overall			15
Project is posted to the class discussion board and quiz questions are submitted on time.	Project is posted, but no quiz questions are shared.	Project is not posted to the discussion board by the deadline.	5
The project's narrative is well conceived and organized? The video shows quality fieldwork and engagement with the music and community.	The project's narrative is inappropriate, poorly articulated, difficult to understand, or otherwise fails to meet expectations.	The project has no overall narrative or argument component.	5
Overall, the project is entertaining and shows effort and collaboration.	Overall the project is good, shows moderate effort, or shows moderate collaboration.	Overall the project shows little effort and collaboration.	5
Topic			10
Clearly introduced topic with specifics and descriptions of who you worked with.	Topic is unclear or unspecific.	Does not give a general overview of the research topic.	10
Argument			10
Articulates research questions in an organized fashion (introduction and conclusion).	Essay moves away from the argument and does not maintain consistent relevancy throughout.	Research questions and argument are absent or poorly articulated.	10
Methodology			5
Video clearly shows the methodology (and group participation).	Methodology is unclear or insufficient for the project.	Video does not clearly or sufficiently demonstrate methodology.	5
Evidence and analysis			10
Ethnographic evidence is clear, specific, and well presented.	Evidence is unclear in presentation throughout the video.	Ethnographic evidence is largely absent or poorly presented.	10

Peer Evaluation: 10%

10 points	5 points	0 points	Maximum Available
Peer assessment grade will be an average of confidential scoring from your group members.			10