Instructor: Dr. Kimberly R. Marion Suiseeya
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Office Hours:
Mondays 3:00 – 5:00
Sign up for an appointment at http://calendly.com/kimberly-marion; other times available by appointment only

“What is hardest of all? That which seems most simple: to see with your eyes what is before your eyes.” — J. W. von Goethe

“If the future is to remain open and free, we need people who can tolerate the unknown, who will not need the support of completely worked out systems or traditional blueprints from the past.” — Margaret Mead

Course Description and Philosophy
What is power? How do we know when we see the workings of power? As a discipline concerned with the systematic study of power and its manifestations in and through systems of governance, political science has primarily studied power ‘from above.’ What does it mean to study politics ‘from below’? What insights about politics can be generated by approaching power from the perspective of peoples’ everyday engagements with political issues and collective action problems? Through this hybrid seminar-practicum, we explore ethnography in theory and practice, as methodology and as method, with particular attention to the ways in which ethnography disrupts and destabilizes our understandings of politics and power. This graduate seminar will be of particular interest to students seeking to explore and understand how immersion contributes to the study of power across multiple topic areas and through multiple subfields. The course readings will draw from exemplar ethnographies and discussions of methodology and method from political science, sociology, and anthropology. Students will design an ethnographic project related to their primary area of interest and practice conducting ethnography. Students should expect to make significant commitments to field research each week. Course requirements include participation and facilitation, a book review, weekly field assignments, and a final paper.

Learning Objectives
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of ethnography as a methodology for studying power
2. Evaluate exemplar ethnographies to understand how ethnography is employed to address different types of questions in diverse settings
3. Engage in collaborative learning and practice for conducting ethnography
4. Cultivate a set of ethical commitments to guide design, practice, and dissemination of research and data governance
5. Produce an original ethnographic field project
Course Materials
Materials required for this course are available through the library or for purchase. You can use any format you choose (electronic, hard cover, paperback). Please secure a copy of the following:

5. Additional materials available online through University Library
6. You will also need a field notebook (paper, not digital please)

Course Format and Requirements
This course is organized as a PhD-level seminar course and, as such, students are expected to come to class fully prepared each day by having completed the readings and weekly assignments before class. The first half or so of each session is discussion and contextualization of course readings and book review presentations; the second half is discussing research design and preparations for your mini-ethnography in assigned working groups.

1. **Participation** (35%): Active and thoughtful participation—including the ability to listen—are an essential part of this seminar and will count for 35% of the course grade. Each student will be assigned a role for each course meeting; your participation grade is based on these active contributions to each session. These roles include: *Facilitator, Key Points, Key Concepts, and Archivist*. Each student will take on the archivist role at least once and at least two of the other roles during the quarter. When not assigned to one of these four roles, students will take on the Participant/Question Posing role. Additional details for each role will be provided in class. A sign-up sheet will be distributed during Class #1.

2. **Book Review** (10%): Students will write a critical review of a political ethnography of their choosing and make an oral presentation in seminar. The review should be no more than 800 words. Book reviews should be analytical, not simply descriptive. Focus on the core argument, methodological commitments, and empirical evidence brought to bear on a research question. Discuss the accomplishments of the book critically in relation to key concepts and/or questions in our course. These reviews should be circulated to course participants no later than noon on the day before our class (Tuesday). A sign-up sheet will be distributed during Class #2. Book Reviews will be due Weeks 3 – 9.

3. **Ethnography** (55%): Each student will complete an original ethnographic project by the end of the quarter. This includes: weekly field assignments (short analysis, field notes, interviews, etc.) a research design proposal (project description and IRB protocol), and a final paper. The final paper should be 12-15 pages (max. 4,000 words) and follow standard formatting and referencing guidelines, due December 10.
   a. Weekly Field Assignments
   b. Research Design Proposal
   c. Final Paper: all components submitted as a compiled dossier
Grading: A = excellent performance, indicative of high potential to succeed in PhD program; A- = very good performance; B+ = solid performance; B = satisfactory, but with identifiable problems; B- = performance raises serious questions about student’s potential to succeed in PhD program; C+ = poor performance. Incompletes will only be considered in extreme circumstances.

Academic Integrity: All work for this course must be original work. Submitting work that has been developed for other courses is considered a violation of academic integrity. All written work for this class must be done individually. You may discuss each paper’s topic and your ideas in advance with your peers, provided you acknowledge them individually in your papers. Please refer to Northwestern’s resources on academic integrity for guidance on how to properly use and credit research in your work. http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/.

Suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Dean's Office. For more information on Northwestern's academic integrity policies, see http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/index.html.

Attendance: Attendance is required for this course. However, please DO NOT come to class—or office hours—if you are sick. Contact me for alternative arrangements.

Late Assignments: No extensions will be granted the day an assignment is due except for documented medical or personal emergencies. Computers crashing, file corruption, and other technology problems are not generally considered valid excuses for late work.

Accommodation: Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class (by September 29). All information will remain confidential.

A note on writing...

Academic writing doesn’t have to be like this.
Here are some resources that I highly recommend for strengthening your writing—these are resources that I continue to refer to year after year in my own writing.


**Detailed Course Schedule**

**Before the Quarter Begins**

*Assignments:*

1. Pre-course Introduction: you will be invited to briefly introduce yourself via Canvas to all course participants. In particular, please answer the following questions: (1) Where do you stand with respect to your fieldwork: finished? just starting? etc.; and, (2) What specific questions or concerns, if any, are you bringing with you to the course?

2. Pre-course Survey: you will be invited to complete a pre-course survey that will help me understand your background and training in methodology. Please complete this as soon as possible. Your responses will help me design the foundations introduced in our first session.

**Week 1 (September 22) Introduction to Political Ethnography**

*Assignments*

1. Complete the pre-course assignments.

*Required Reading (please read in the order assigned)*


*Further Reading*


**Week 2 (September 29): Experiencing Politics from Below**

*Assignments:*

1. Short Analysis: In no more than 800 words, critically analyze the Curato book. Discuss the argument, literature review, and ethnographic discussion in the book. Make a case for the question Curato was trying to answer and what evidence they used to do so.

2. Submit the title of the book you plan on reviewing.
Required Reading:

Week 3 (October 6): Research Design: Constructing the Ethnographic ‘Field’

Assignments:
1. Initial Project Description and IRB Proposal Due Friday, October 8
2. Familiarize yourself with Northwestern University’s Institutional Review Board and requirements; Complete CITI

Required Reading:
3. CARE Principles

Further Readings

Week 4 (October 13): Research Design: Ethnographic Objects, Ethnographic Subjects

Assignments:
1. First set of typed field notes due Friday, October 15

Required Reading:

Further Reading:

Week 5 (October 20): Writing Ethnography

Required Reading:

Further Readings:

Week 6 (October 27): Ethnographic Tools: Observing, Asking, Doing, and Feeling

Required Reading:

**Further Readings:**

**Week 7 (November 3): Ethnographic Refusal**

**Required Reading:**

**Week 8 (November 10): Meaning Making through Analysis and Interpretation**

**Required Reading:**

**Week 9 (November 17): Interrogating Evidence and Ethnographic Authority**

**Assignments:**
1. Second set of typed field notes due **Friday, November 19**

**Required Reading:**

Week 10 (December 1): Ethnographic Workshop
Assignments: none

Required Reading: TBD