

## **MUET 5220: Ethnomusicology Field and Research Methods**

**Spring 2021**

Professor: Dr. Cathy Ragland

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Zoom Office Hours: Tues. 2-3pm, or make an appointment for another day/time

Remote meetings, Weds. 1-3:50pm

### **Topic of Study:**

This course introduces students to fieldwork and research methods in ethnomusicology through reading, conversation, imagination, and practice. Throughout the course we will move back and forth between learning from others' experiences in the field and learning from our own experiences. While conducting "real-time" fieldwork in the DFW area may seem (on the surface) to have an order – a progression from formulating a research plan to going to the field to publishing the results – you will find that it does not always work out so neatly in practice. Decisions about research foci, intended results, fieldwork methodology, and practice very often can be reshaped at each stage. In class, therefore, while we are formulating ideas for projects or questions to ask, we will also be reading about, discussing and writing fieldwork proposals, field notes and an ethnography\*. The class will be a seminar format with group discussions at its core; we will have visitors sharing their experiences in class and work on projects as a group as well as individually. We will also learn about some basics of preparing funding proposals and on using various technologies in fieldwork.

*\*Ethnography aims to describe the nature of those who are studied (i.e. to describe a people, an ethnos) through data collection, research analysis and writing. Ethnographers generate understandings of how people communicate (and more specifically to our interests: make, create and think about music) by studying the "insider's point of view." Roughly speaking, an ethnographic approach to research on music and/or social life is one that centers on meaning as created through musical activity by practitioners and experienced by audiences and the community as a whole. Likewise, while working to understand issues such as group identity formation and status displayed through music, we will sketch musicians' effect on belief systems, culture and society.*

### **Course Goals and Outcomes:**

- Read, critique and discuss music ethnographies, some of which the discipline has made into "classics" and explore newer orientations which question the most fundamental aspects of fieldwork as it has been conceived and practiced.

- To develop an understanding of fieldwork as a site of both practical and theoretical concerns, and to develop familiarity with and critical interest in theoretical issues, the ethics and politics of the ethnographic enterprise, reflexivity and advocacy as they relate to community-based music and performance.
- To regularly monitor and report on the methodological and practical steps taken during the class fieldwork project and working closely with folklorists/culture brokers at Texas Folklife as part of the **Texas Folklife Spring 2021 UNT-UT Austin Collaborative Music Survey Project**.
- To become acquainted with a variety of practical fieldwork methods and develop and/or refine skills in participant observation, field notes, interviewing, data organization and analysis.
- To create and critically assess writing and representation of field data.
- To create a proposal for a future fieldwork project proposal and/or grant opportunity.

**Selected Books** (I will place in Canvas select chapters from the following books and articles from journals and other sources for class reading/discussion):

Campbell, Elizabeth and Luke Eric Lassiter (2014). *Doing Ethnography Today: Theories, Methods, Exercises*, Wiley-Blackwell.

Barz, Gregory and Timothy Cooley, eds. (2008). *Shadows in the Field*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Emerson, Robert M., et al. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sarah Pink, et al. (2015). *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice*. Thousand Oaks: CA: SAGE Publications.

Gilman, Lisa and John Fenn (2019). *Handbook for Folklore and Ethnomusicology Fieldwork*. Indiana University Press.

### **Assignments/Activities:**

Class meetings and assignments will roughly follow the chronology from pre-fieldwork planning to post-fieldwork representation of data, addressing both practical and principle concerns at each stage. Readings, assignments and class discussions throughout the course will help students reflect upon the dilemmas and challenges of the fieldwork experience so you can make informed decisions for their own research. Details will be given about how to do each assignment in class and posted on Canvas.

In addition to assignments, every student will have the opportunity to act as a **discussion leader** for assigned readings. In this capacity, you will read chapter or article, give a brief summary and present a list of 3-4 provocative questions to help guide, nurture, and stimulate the conversation of the class. Your classmates will have

posted their comments/thoughts/questions in a discussion post prior to class and should add to further discussion.

### **Ethnography Critique Assignment:**

You will give a 15-minute presentation with 5-10 minutes extra for questions and comments from the class on **Wednesday, March 10**. Your presentation should be accompanied by a handout for the class OR a power point (or other presentation software such as prezi, keynote, etc.) which will be submitted in Canvas. A full details on this assignment is posted in the module for March 3rd in Canvas.

Below are some ethnographies in ethnomusicology from which to choose, Most of these books should be available in the UNT library or via Interlibrary loan. If you wish to propose another book to report on feel free to discuss it with me and I will consider it. Otherwise, choose from the following. **Please let me know which you would like to analyze for this assignment by January 20:**

- Keil, Charles. 1979. *Tiv Song: The Sociology of Art in a Classless Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Seeger, Anthony. 1987. *Why Suya Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Waterman, Christopher. 1990. *Juju Music: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sugarman, Jane. 1997. *Engendering Song: Singing and Subjectivity at Prespa Albanian Weddings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Koskoff, Ellen. 2000. *Music in Lubavitcher life*. Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Meintjes, Louise. 2003. *Sound of Africa: Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Drew, Rob. 2001. *Karaoke Nights: An Ethnographic Rhapsody*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- McDonald, David A. 2013. *My Voice is My Weapon: Music, Nationalism, and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance*. Raleigh/Durham: Duke University Press.

### **Texas Folklife Spring 2021 UNT-UT Austin Collaborative Music Survey Project:**

This will be an ongoing project which will allow you real world experience in conducting research, interviewing, collecting photographs, videos, and other ephemera, writing fieldnotes and editing them into final entries of 600-900 words to be added to a digital cultural map of Texas musicians, cultural arts/presenting organizations, and grassroots community culture brokers/presenters/advocates for traditional and vernacular music in Texas. You will have guidance from myself, Charlie Lockwood (Texas Folklife Director), and one of his assistants for each of the three regions we have been assigned to research:

1. Rio Grande Valley near cities of Laredo / Del Rio
2. Texas Plains Trail (Panhandle)
3. Texas Mountain Trail Region (Especially El Paso and surrounding)

We will discuss your progress in class meetings and as part of your regional teams. In addition to your final portfolio of materials for Texas Folklife, you will submit a approx. 3 page assessment/reflection essay of the project, your experience, and what you envision uses and contribution to cultural sustainability, artist development and support, and activist/advocacy ethnomusicology. More details will be given by Charlie Lockwood in his meeting with us (and Dr. Seeman's class) on Thursday, Feb 4 (note: for anyone not able to make the Thursday meeting, I will record the session and make it available to you.

**Fieldwork Project (Grant) Proposal Assignment.** You will write a project proposal draft that reflects considerable thought about your fieldwork/research design and what theoretical approach(es) you will utilize to help you frame your project. It could be part of a thesis or dissertation project or a fieldwork project you would like to conduct abroad, locally, or virtually for a paper/article, film project, or community-based project. It will include a short project narrative, fieldwork plan, theoretical and methodological approach, a brief budget, and a bibliography. More detail on this assignment will be available on Canvas. The paper should be approx. 7 pages **is due by Friday, April 30. You will give a 15-minute presentation of your project to the class on Wednesday, April 28.** Meet with me before starting on this assignment, preferably by mid-February.

***Note:** This class is a methods course where you will be working on the Texas Folklife Music Survey Project and your own Fieldwork Project Proposal, therefore, I will leave time during our meetings to check in and discuss any issues related to either of these ongoing projects. You will also have an assistant from Texas folklife assigned to your research group, so reach out to them (and to me) as well.*

### **Expectations for all written assignments:**

All written assignments are to be:

- double-spaced, using 12-point font for body copy (headings/subheads, if used, can be slightly larger; footnotes can be slightly smaller), with
- pages having 1-inch margins on all four sides and numbered (no number needed for first page),
- clearly labeled with student name, course number, and submitted into Canvas

All submissions should use collegiate-level vocabulary, employ a scholarly literary style, and should not include language or style of a colloquial nature (i.e., no incomplete or run-on sentences, misspellings, slang, etc.). All quotations, references, examples, illustrations, tables, etc. must be properly and consistently formatted.

**Evaluation will be based on satisfactory completion of the following:**

Five Assignments/Exercises = 10pts ea. (50pts. total)

Ethnography critique + class presentation = 20pts

Texas Folklife Collaborative Music Survey Project Portfolio = 90pts

Survey Project assessment = 10pts

Future fieldwork project/grant proposal (working document) = 30pts

**Total points earned =200**

**Attendance and Participation:** This is **crucial** to the success of this class. First and foremost, attendance is **mandatory**, more than two absences could cause the downgrade of a full letter grade or more depending on absences. Always let me know if you cannot attend Zoom class for any reason or if there is an emergency, let me know as soon as possible. We will be a fairly small group so it is imperative that everyone attend and participate fully in all discussions and activities. My hope is that the material and assignments will inspire lively and stimulating discussions essential to learning about researching and writing about music. In-class participation and preparedness will be expected in every class and expressed through in-class discussions, regular attendance, activities and timely delivery of assignments. These things will be considered in grading the above assignments. ***While I have not listed this in this above evaluation criteria, however, I will consider the lack of attendance and/or participation in the final grading process.***

**COVID-19 impact on attendance**

*While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent as to what may be preventing you from coming to class so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.*

*If you are experiencing cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, or any of the other possible symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or [askSHWC@unt.edu](mailto:askSHWC@unt.edu)) or your health care provider. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.*

## Weekly Course Outline

\*Readings and assignment details in Canvas modules for the week they are due.

**Note:** The following week-by-week plan is subject to change. While you will always hear about any changes in class, be sure to check in Canvas often.

**Jan 13: Course Introduction/Orientation:** Course overview, Projects, etc.

**Jan 20: What Ethnomusicologists Do and the IRB**

SEM Position Statement on the IRB:

[https://www.ethnomusicology.org/general/custom.asp?page=PS\\_IRB](https://www.ethnomusicology.org/general/custom.asp?page=PS_IRB)

Rice, Timothy. Ch. 1 “Defining Ethnomusicology” and Ch. 3 “Conducting Research.” *Ethnomusicology, A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Assignment: Take CITI Training and submit certificate

**Jan 27: The Ethnomusicologist and Ethnographic Authority**

Clifford, James. “On Ethnographic Authority.” *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. “The Ethnomusicologist, Ethnographic Method and the Transmission of Tradition.” (Ch. 9, *Shadows in the Field*).

**Feb 4 (Thursday): Texas Folklife Collaborative Music Survey Project (Description, Goals Deliverables)** Guest speaker: Charlie Lockwood, Texas Folklife director via Zoom on Thursday, Feb 4 @ 2pm (meeting will be recorded if you cannot make this day/time). **No meeting on Wednesday.**

**Feb 10: Preparing for the field, Interviewing, and Fieldnotes: In Fieldwork and Texas Folklife Music Survey Project**

Barz, Gergory. “Confronting the Field(Note), In and Out of the Field” (Ch. 3, *Shadows in the Field*).

Boellstorff, Tom, et al. “Participant Observation in Virtual Worlds Research.” *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Emerson, Robert M., et al. “Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research.” (Ch. 1, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*)

Jackson, Bruce. Ch. “Fieldwork,” “Fieldworker Roles, and “Interviewing.” *Fieldwork*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987.

### **Feb 17: Digital and Hybrid Ethnography - Principles, Practices, Localities**

Pink, Sarah, et al. "Researching Practices" and "Other Data Collection Methods for Virtual Worlds Research." *Digital Ethnography, Principles and Practices*. New York: Sage Publications, 2015.

Boellstorff, Tom, et al. "Data Analysis." *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Hsu, Wendy S. "Digital Ethnography Toward Augmented Empiricism: A New Methodological Framework." *Journal of Digital Humanities*, 3:1, 2014.

### **Feb 24: Reflexive Ethnography, Gender, and Inclusion in the Field**

Hahn, Tomie. "Emerging Voices: Encounters with Reflexivity." *Atlantis Atlantis*, 30:2, 2006.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Can There Be A Feminist Ethnography?" *Women & Performance*, 5:1, 1990.

Appert, Catherine M. "Engendering Musical Ethnography." *Ethnomusicology*, 61:3, 2017.

Rooke, Alison. "Queer in the Field: On Emotions, Temporality, and Performativity in Ethnography." *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 13:149-160, 2009.

Henson, Bryce. "Look! A Black Ethnographer!": Fanon, Performance, and Critical Ethnography." *Cultural Studies-Critical Methodologies* 20:4, 2020.

### **March 3: Critiquing Participant Observation and Ethnographic Stance in the Field**

Bigenho, Michelle. "Why I'm Not an Ethnomusicologist: A View from Anthropology." *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, Henry Stobart, ed., Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2008.

Mosher, Rhiannon, et al. "Agency and Agendas: Revisiting the Roles of the Researcher and the Researched in Ethnographic Fieldwork." *Anthropologica*, 59:1, 2017.

Justice, Deborah and Fredara M. Hadley. "Collaborative Fieldwork, "Stance," and Ethnography." *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 47, 2015.

### **Mar 10: Ethnography Critique Presentations (due this week - see syllabus for book choices)**

Individual presentations.

### **Mar 24: Thick Description, Interpretation, and Writing Ethnographies**

Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" and "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Thick Description Assignment.

### **Mar 31: Ethnographic Filmmaking in Ethnomusicology I: Early Methods and Uses**

Feld, Steven. "Ethnomusicology and Visual Communication." *Ethnomusicology*, 20:2, 1976.

Zemp, Hugo. "Filming Music and Looking at Music Films." *Ethnomusicology*, 32:3, 1988.

Video ethnography project due

**Apr 7: Ethnographic Filmmaking in Ethnomusicology II: Filmmaking as Ethnomusicology-"ciné-ethnomusicology"** (Guest lecture - Ethnomusicologist-Filmmaker Benjamin Harbert, Assoc. Professor, Georgetown University, Dept. of Performing Arts).

Harbert, Benjamin. *American Music Documentary: Five Case Studies of Ciné-Ethnomusicology*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Film (watch before class meeting): Follow Me Down: Portraits of Louisiana Prison Musicians (2012, dir. Benjamin Harbert)

**Apr 14: No class meeting** (work on Texas Folklife Collaborative Music Survey Project deliverables and Future fieldwork/grant project proposal)

**Apr 21: Texas Folklife Collaborative Music Survey Project discussion and wrap-up w/ Charlie Lockwood, Cecelia Ottenweller, and guests.** Have Texas Folklife Survey Assessment/Reflection paper/notes available for discussion, it is due Monday, April 26.

**Apr 28: Future Fieldwork Project/Grant proposal (working paper)** - Discuss/Present on your final project.

Final Paper due Friday, April 30.

### **IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY POLICY INFORMATION (Links)**

#### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

See: [Academic Integrity](#)



LINK: [https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003.AcadIntegrity.Final\\_.pdf](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003.AcadIntegrity.Final_.pdf)

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

See: [Student Code of Conduct](#)

Link: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

## **ACCESS TO INFORMATION – EAGLE CONNECT**

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at [my.unt.edu](http://my.unt.edu). All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect.

See: [Eagle Connect](#)

LINK: [eagleconnect.unt.edu/](http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/)

## **ODA STATEMENT**

See: [ODA](#)

LINK: [disability.unt.edu](http://disability.unt.edu). (Phone: (940) 565-4323)

## **UNT Policy Statement on Diversity**

UNT values diversity and individuality as part of advancing ideals of human worth, dignity and academic excellence.

See: [Diversity Statement](#)

Link: [https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/04.018\\_PolicyStateOnDiversity.pub8\\_.18.pdf](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/04.018_PolicyStateOnDiversity.pub8_.18.pdf)

## **2020-2021 Semester Academic Schedule (with Add/Drop Dates)**

See: [Spring, 2021 Registration Guide](#)

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-registration-guide>

## **Academic Calendar at a Glance, 2020-2021**

See: [Academic Calendar](#)

Link: <https://www.unt.edu/catalogs/2020-21/calendar>

## **Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress**

### Graduates

See: [Financial Aid](#)

LINK: <http://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>

## **RETENTION OF STUDENT RECORDS**

See: [FERPA](#)

Link: <http://ferpa.unt.edu/>

## **COUNSELING AND TESTING**

UNT's Center for Counseling and Testing has an available counselor whose position includes 16 hours per week of dedicated service to students in the College of Music and the College of Visual Arts and Design. Please visit the Center's website for further information:

See: [Counseling and Testing](#)

Link: <http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>.

For more information on mental health issues, please visit:

See: [Mental Health Issues](#)

Link: <https://speakout.unt.edu>.

The counselor for music students is:

Myriam Reynolds

Chestnut Hall, Suite 311

(940) 565-2741

[Myriam.reynolds@unt.edu](mailto:Myriam.reynolds@unt.edu)

## **ADD/DROP POLICY**

See: [Add Drop](#)

Link: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-registration-guide>

## **STUDENT RESOURCES**

The University of North Texas has many resources available to students. For a complete list, go to:

See: [Student Resources](#)

Link: [https://www.unt.edu/sites/default/files/resource\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.unt.edu/sites/default/files/resource_sheet.pdf)