Welcome Letter  
EER 8710: Advanced Ethnographic Research

Dear Students,

Welcome to EER 8710, a doctoral course on Advanced Ethnographic Research. Thank you so much for continuing forward with this course sequence.

This course is a direct extension of the ethnographic research methodologies learned in the Winter 2017 section of EER 7880. In building upon previous experiences, this course aims to balance contemporary issues in ethnographic fieldwork, writing, and representation with historically-informed understandings of how ethnography has developed over time. Put simply, we will examine where ethnography has been, where it is now, and where it seems to be heading.

The first portion of the course will focus on how images, video, and other multi-media are increasingly being incorporated into various phases of ethnographic research. The second portion will focus on the different ways in which fieldwork and participant observations are written. From fieldnotes to fiction to empirical findings and more, there are many ways for authors to position themselves in relation to a text. We will read a series of articles that show not only how authors have conducted ethnographies, but how they have also thought about how to be better ethnographers and do ethnography differently. Later, we will have the opportunity to interact with some of these same authors over multiple guest lectures.

The third portion is the thread that holds the course together. It is built around the question of how, as scholars, can we read generatively? As I later explain, I take generative as a way of being truthful, while also being thoughtful, constructive, and kind. In addition to independent book studies and the creation of future reading lists, we also will develop reading techniques over the course of the semester. We will move beyond easy critiques to engage with texts as works that have been written by specific authors for specific purposes. And, in the process, we will engage with scholarly reading as a social practice.

Taken together, this course aims to support the development of up-to-date methodological skills, understandings, and next steps that will help guide your research paths forward as you continue to progress through your doctoral studies.

I am looking forward to a wonderful semester with you all.

Warm regards,
Jasmine B. Ulmer