

AMST 540: Ethnography and Society

Final Project Guidelines

For this project you will outline a potential ethnographic research project, which you will describe in a 10-page, double-spaced paper.

Imagine that you are creating a research proposal for a granting organization. This organization wants to provide researchers in cultural topics with funding to undertake their research, but its reviewers, while trained academics, are not ethnographers. You will need to outline your project in a way that non-specialists will understand. (Your proposed project should be the same one you described in your Mock IRB Proposal.)

To accomplish this, your paper should include the following elements:

1. An **introduction** of about one page, in which you clearly state your topic and broadly outline its significance. That is, why does this research area *matter*? Why would a granting body want to give you money to study it?
2. A **literature review** section. This will take approximately 3-4 pages, and is your chance to situate your proposed research in the broader context of relevant scholarship. This is where you describe relevant works of scholarship and how their insights can apply to the work you are proposing to do. There is no specific limit to the number of texts to include here; you will have to decide how many are necessary to fully situate your research proposal. You are not limited to explicitly ethnographic texts here: your job is to show how the ideas, theories, themes, and topics you want to explore might relate to previous scholarship in all relevant fields. This section will also help you in crafting your argument in #4 below, as one contribution of any research project is to increase scholarly knowledge. (Although you **may** reference texts from class in this section, please **do not reproduce content from your Critical Abstracts or the Collaborative Annotated Bibliography.**)
3. A **methodology** section, also about 3-4 pages, in which you describe how you will actually undertake your research. Obviously you will conduct “ethnographic fieldwork,” but remember that the review committee is not composed of ethnographers. What *exactly* will you do? Will you engage exclusively in participant observation in a single geographic site, or will you undertake a mixed-methods study? If the latter, what other methods will you use? Where will your research take place? Will you move among several sites? How long will you be “in the field”? These and other questions should inform your methodology section. (Look to the ethnographies we read in class for examples.)
4. An **expected outcomes/contribution** section, 1-3 pages, taking up the final third, where you discuss what you hope to learn through your research, and how it might contribute to scholarly understanding. This section should also include any expected benefits your work might have for the people you are working with (e.g., in a reciprocal ethnography). This section is necessarily speculative: you cannot know all the outcomes now, before you’ve done the research.

Final Project Rubric

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Introduction (20pts)	Clearly states topic & its significance in broader scholarly context.	Adequately states topic and gestures toward its broader significance.	Topic is present but unclear/unfocused. Significance inadequately addressed.	Topic is unclearly stated or absent. Significance of project is not mentioned.
Literature Review (90pts)	Comprehensive lit review points out relevant scholarly works, identifies their key contributions, and situates proposed research in context of related studies. Makes good reference to both theoretical and methodological insights from scholarship.	Lit review adequately points out related research/theories and methodological frameworks. Could be expanded.	Lit review is present but insufficient to situate present project in larger context of relevant scholarship.	Lit review fails to adequately present relevant scholarship.
Methodology Section (90pts)	Clearly outlines research plan and all steps involved, including site(s) of research, forms of data-gathering (participant observation, interviewing, surveys, etc.).	Outlines major research steps, locations, and methods.	Some research methods are discussed, but section is sparse, unclear, or otherwise inadequate.	Methodology section is absent or undeveloped.
Outcomes/ Contribution (50pts)	Includes projected outcomes/knowledge hoped to be gained. Argues convincingly for intellectual as well as social contributions of research.	Makes basic argument for both intellectual and social significance of research.	Argument for contributions of project are weaker, not supported by prior assertions, or generally unclear.	Fails to note potential intellectual or social contributions.