

Common List of Generic Electives (GE) Semester VII

Sociology Generic Elective (GE) 19 Reading Ethnographies

GENERIC ELECTIVE COURSE-19 (GE-19) : Reading Ethnographies

CREDIT DISTRIBUTION, ELIGIBILITY AND PRE-REQUISITES OF THE COURSE

| Course title & Code | Credits | Credit distribution of the course | | | Eligibility criteria | Pre-requisite of the course (if any) |
|---|---------|-----------------------------------|----------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | Lecture | Tutorial | Practical/ Practice | | |
| GE-19: Reading Ethnographies | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 12th Class Pass | Nil |

Learning Objectives:

1. This course encourages students to engage deeply with ethnographic texts by reading them in their entirety.
2. The course is designed to help students critically engage with ethnographies as a distinctive way of understanding social realities. Each unit focuses on a particular aspect of ethnography, supported by relevant readings.
3. Through this course, students will develop the ability to critically analyse the process of fieldwork, as well as the themes of representation, ethics, and writing in ethnographic production.
4. Students will understand the limits of inquiry in ethnographic research and understand ethnographic representation as a distinct mode of knowledge.
5. By fostering critical and interpretive skills for engaging with diverse social realities and lived experiences, the course aligns itself with **SDG 4 – Quality Education**

Learning outcomes:

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

1. Develop the ability to read, understand, and critically analyse an ethnographic text, with attention to fieldwork methodologies, writing styles, ethical concerns, and representation.

2. Understand the complexities of conducting ethnographic research, including the interplay between the researcher (self) and the subjects (other).
3. Assess the ways in which ethnographies construct knowledge and how context, subjectivity, and objectivity shape these narratives.
4. Learn to identify what matters to people within their lived experiences by paying close attention to small details and the socio-cultural contexts within which ethnographies are situated.
5. Reflect on the ethical dimensions of fieldwork and ethnographic writing, including the responsibilities of researchers toward the communities they study.
6. Demonstrate skills critical to pursuit of **SDG 4 – Quality Education**.

SYLLABUS OF GE:

Unit I. Ethnographic Mode of Enquiry (9 Hours)

This unit introduces the historical development of ethnographic methods, focusing on foundational debates, early methodologies, and shifting perspectives over time.

- a. Defining Ethnography
- b. How to Read an Ethnography?

Unit II. Field, Self and the Other: Method and Scope (9 Hours)

This unit examines the practice of fieldwork, addressing methodological concerns and discussions on field immersion, participant observation and the insider-outsider debate in ethnographic research.

- a. Ethnographic Method: The Beginnings
- b. Ethnographic Fieldwork
- c. Self and the Other

Unit III. Ethnographic Writing: Representation and Ethics in the Field (9 Hours)

This unit critically examines how ethnographic knowledge is constructed and represented along with the ethical responsibilities of researchers in writing ethnographies.

- a. Ethnographic Representation
- b. Ethics of Ethnographic Research

Unit IV. Ethnographic Text (18 Hours)

This unit focuses on reading and analysing a complete ethnographic text. Students will engage with one selected monograph to understand how ethnographic research is synthesized into a comprehensive narrative, exploring themes, methodological approaches, and theoretical contributions.

Practical Component: NIL

Essential/Recommended Readings:

Unit I. Ethnographic Mode of Enquiry

a. Defining Ethnography

Naidoo, Loshini. 2012. Ethnography: An Introduction to Definition and Method, in *An Ethnography of Global Landscapes and Corridors*, Open access peer-reviewed edited volume. Pp. 1-10.

b. How to Read an Ethnography?

Blasco, Paloma Gay y and Huon Wardle. 2007. Introduction, in *How to Read Ethnography*, London: Routledge. Pp. 1-12.

Unit II. Field, Self and the Other: Method and Scope

a. Ethnographic Method: The Beginnings

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. Introduction, in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagos of Melanesian New Guinea*, Studies in Economics and Political Science, no. 65. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Pp. 1-25.

b. Ethnographic Fieldwork

Rabinow, Paul. 1977 [2007]. *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*, Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 1-7, 151-161.

c. Self and the Other

Srinivas, M.N. 2002. The Insider Versus the Outsider in the Study of Cultures in V.K. Srivastava (ed.) *Methodology and fieldwork*. Pp. 413-420.

Unit III. Ethnographic Writing: Representation and Ethics in the Field

a. Ethnographic Representation

Rosaldo, Renato. 1989. Introduction to the 1993 edition & Introduction: Grief and a Headhunter's Rage in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analyses*, Boston: Beacon Press. Pp. ix-xix, 1-21.

b. Ethics of Ethnographic Research

Narayan, Kirin. (2012). *Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov*. United Kingdom: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 1-22.

Nordstrom, Carolyn and Antonius Robben. 1996 [2012]. Introduction in *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 1-19.

Unit IV. Ethnographic Text:

Select any One Ethnography from the Following:

Srinivas, M. N. 1952. *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*. Clarendon Press.

or

Bailey, F. G. 1957 *Caste and the Economic Frontier: a village in highland Orissa*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

or

Goffman, Erving. 1961. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and other Inmates*. Anchor Books.

or

Kumar, Nita. 1988. *The Artisans of Banaras: Popular Culture and Identity, 1880-1986*. United States: Princeton University Press.

or

Dickey, Sara. 2007. *Cinema and the Urban Poor in South India*. India: Cambridge University Press.

Suggested Readings:

Bryman, Alan, 2001. *Ethnography*. Volume 1, Sage Publications. London, California, New Delhi.

Clifford, James and George Marcus. 1986. Introduction in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. London: University of California Press. Pp. 1-25.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books. Pp. 3-30.

Geertz, Clifford. 1988. *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, California: Stanford University Press, Chapters 6. Pp. 129-149.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1973. *Tristes Tropiques*. London: Penguin.

Marcus, George and Dick Cushman. 1982. Ethnographies as Texts. *Annual Review Anthropology*, 11, 25-69.

Nordstrom, Carolyn and Antonius Robben, 1996 [2012], *Epilogue in Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tinker, C., & Armstrong, N. 2008. From the Outside Looking in: How an Awareness of Difference Can Benefit the Qualitative Research Process. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(1), 53-60.

Note: Examination scheme and mode shall be as prescribed by the Examination Branch, University of Delhi, from time to time.