

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Course	TOOLS FOR READING SOCIAL CONTEXT: ETHNOGRAPHY FOR MINISTRY CHED 0662
Date and Time	JANUARY 11 – APRIL 12, 2021 TUESDAYS 8:15 – 11:05 AM
Instructor	YAU MAN SIEW, PhD Phone number: 416 226 6620 ext. 6750 Email: ysiew@tyndale.ca
Class Information	This is a hybrid course, with some pre-recorded lectures for asynchronous access and weekly livestream class sessions on Tuesdays at 9 AM (about 1.5 hours) to review major themes, Q&A, reflections, and breakout discussions. Office Hours: Weekly on Mondays at 11:00 AM
Course Material	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. Learn how to access and forward emails to your personal account.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ethnographic research aims to equip students to “read” people in their contexts reliably and accurately. If contextualized ministry is being accountable to the hermeneutical obligations of the gospel, contextual analysis is fundamental to all Christian work. Skills of observation, in-depth interviewing, data analysis and the preparation of instruments for testing generalizations in larger or contrasting settings will be developed. This course facilitates the ability to carry out field research in the style, form and discipline of anthropological inquiry.

Ethnography is a tool that anthropologists use to better understand people groups. Ethnographers learn to attend to what people do by being a participant observer, embedded in a community of practice. Pastors and ministry leaders are “shepherds” of the people. As we look at who is coming and going, the important questions are not just where they come from, but the cultural liturgies (formative practices) that shape them, and the contested spaces they occupied before they enter sacred space. Other important questions ministry leaders need to ask include how people are engaging with the various Christian ministries, and what the Holy Spirit is actually doing in the faith community.¹

This course seeks to meet the Master of Divinity learning outcome #2: “To acquire capacities for understanding and engaging cultural, social & global context of God’s mission in world.”

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. Understand the fundamentals of ethnographic-qualitative research and its applications to ministry contexts.
2. Carry out accurate cultural description and evaluate sociological phenomenon as a preliminary step in strategic ministry planning and for effective assessment.
3. Write, read, and evaluate ethnographic-qualitative studies with greater depth and understanding.

Experienced teachers of ethnographic research affirm the value of fieldwork for beginning students. The best way to develop the craft of field research is through regular practice in actual social situations. This course will have a fair amount of fieldwork and students should view these as essential and complementary to class learning. With Covid-19, this field research would mainly be conducted via interviews using Zoom or MS Teams.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

¹ James K. A. Smith, *You are What You Love* (Brazos, 2016) note that “pastors need to be ethnographers of the everyday, helping parishioners see their own environment as one that is formative, and all too often *deformative*.” (p. 40). Some of the ideas for this course description are adapted from a wonderful interview with James K.A. Smith and Rev. Jay Greener, “[Pastor as Ethnographer](#),” Carl Henry Center, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Oct. 31, 2013.

McCurdy, David W., James P. Spradley and Dianna Shandy. *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society*. Second edition. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2004 (referred to as “MSS 2004” in the syllabus). Available in Kindle edition at Amazon Canada.

Moschella, Mary Clark. *Ethnography as Pastoral Practice: An Introduction*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2008 (referred to as “M 2008” in the syllabus).

Selection of articles and book chapters for class discussion (about 300 pages, on [Moodle](#)). Completion of M 2008 and these articles/book chapters prior to small group discussions is expected. Your completion of readings, participation, and contributions would be “graded” by your peers (clear grading rubric provided; see assignment #3).

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Van den Hoonaard, Debra K. *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer*, 3rd edition. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018.

A good introduction and standard text in qualitative research with many Canadian examples.

Mary Clark Moschella and Susan Willhauck (Editors), *Qualitative Research in Theological Education: Pedagogy in Practice* (SCM Press, 2018)

Interesting insights on qualitative research in theological education by various contributors.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Editors. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 11th Edition. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 2011.

This handbook is housed in the ABBA Resource Centre Stacks, Tyndale Library, and is an amazing collection of articles by renowned scholars in the discipline.

Baker, Dori Grinenko. Editor. *Greenhouses of Hope*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2010.

A compilation of inspiring stories of congregations which helped young leaders discern their gifts and pastoral calling.

Patton, Michael Q. [Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods](#). 3rd edition. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 2002.

Patton is a lucid, creative, and dynamic scholar in this field. We will discuss one chapter from this book.

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi

D. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. An Exercise in Getting to Know Ethnographic-Qualitative Research (10% of grade)

This assignment fulfills learning outcomes #1 & #2

Front Burner (CBC Podcast), "Guns, gangs and racism in a Prairie city" (Jan. 3, 2020), link on Moodle.

Listen together in class (20 mins.) in Week #3

Take notes as to how the reporter, Duncan McCue, went about collecting data for his report on why there was such a high gun crime rate in North-Central Regina.

Note: Duncan McCue is Anishinaabe, from Ontario, a member of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and is trained in law and journalism. This report in no way stereotypes this community in North-Central Regina, and I am using it to better understand qualitative research and bases of findings about this issue.

Discuss in small groups

Who did the reporter talk to?

What events did he visit? What did he see?

What follow up events did he attend? How did this add to his data?

Write a one-page report, using these headings:

(a) "Clear the Mind"

What were some ideas, feelings that you have/had about the cultural scene/situation before you began this exercise? What did you need to put aside so as not to "color" what you hear?

(b) "Patterns"

What "patterns" did you discern (e.g. recurring behavior; repeated phenomena, events, incidents)? What "artifacts" (things people use in daily life) were discussed that were important?

(c) "Interpretation"

What possible meanings did McCue infer from his research into this problem? What “hypothesis/es” does/did he draw about the situation? Do you agree/disagree? Why?

Length: one-page, single space

Due: Feb. 2

Evaluation: clear and concise report, detailing the three headings.

2. Critique of One Ethnography (20% of grade)

This assignment fulfills learning outcome #3

You will select and read three ethnographies in Part II of “MSS 2004.” Select ONE of these ethnographies and write a critique in which the purpose, method, findings, and quality of the work are evaluated.

The criteria for this evaluation come from major topics covered in this course. In addition, the “ethnographic sequence” provided by Prof. Ward (Syllabus, pp. 2-3) would be additional supplement to your criteria.

Length: 3 pages, single-spaced.

Due: Mar. 30

Evaluation: Your critique should demonstrate a clear outline of the author’s purpose, method (data collection, analysis) and findings. The main evaluation question is whether these findings were supported by the data, as well as areas in which the work could be improved.

3. Breakout Group Discussions (25% of grade)

This assignment fulfills learning outcome #1 & #2

You will be assigned to a breakout discussion group each week. You will complete assigned required readings (“M 2008”; articles/chapters) and be prepared to engage meaningfully with students in your group. Students will take turns to lead and be note taker-time keeper each week. Group leaders will email a grade for yourself and each member of your group at the end of the discussion directly to the instructor. These grades will be kept confidential. A grading rubric for this “breakout group discussion” will be provided.

4. Major Project & Presentation (45% of grade)

This assignment fulfills learning outcomes #1, #2 & #3

Major Project

The major project would involve about 12-15 hours of fieldwork (three interviews, transcription, data analysis). Your written project should demonstrate the following components:

(a) Introduction and field work: brief description of group; major research question; gaining entry and working with participants; list of interview questions; fieldnotes.

(b) Data analysis and triangulation: strategy for organizing and coding of data for analysis; triangulation for accuracy. You need to provide one page of sample fieldnotes and one page of interviews (with markings/codes).

(c) Conclusion: findings, implications, and issues for further study.

Throughout this paper, you should make references to the required readings (with direct referenced quotations) and lectures in this course. This demonstrates that your major project is well-grounded theoretically.

Length: 8-10 pages, single-spaced (excluding sample pages of fieldnotes and interviews).

Due: Apr. 12

Evaluation: Criteria posted on Moodle.

Presentation

Students will share their research project with the whole class on the last day of class (Apr. 6). Use of MS PowerPoint, with a clear outline of main research question, data collection, analysis and findings is expected. You may not have completed writing up the whole project, but you should have completed major or full data analysis for this presentation.

Ethnographic Sequences

As you embark on fieldwork, you will begin the research process with the following ethnographic sequences in mind:²

1. Clear the mind (as much as possible) of presuppositions, expectations, and predictions, which can so easily become self-fulfilling prophecies. In contrast, watch or ask with an openness to see and hear things as they really are.
2. Search for patterns—look out for recurring behaviors, sequences, or any other (observable) phenomena, which seem not to be random or coincidental.

² These insights were from Ted W. Ward, Professor Emeritus at Michigan State University and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS), my doctoral mentor who first taught me the delight of living the ethnographic life.

3. Document—write or commit to memory (for prompt audio recording) the essential elements of the encounters and transactions.
4. Interpret—while suppressing the temptation to jump to conclusions, it is necessary to propose meanings (often several possible meanings) inferred from the interactions. These too must be reduced to writing.
5. Reexamine—look and ask again in order to seek corrections and to note possible alternatives to the previous observations, to what you heard, and judgments made.
6. Report—with the objectivity and clarity of a data-based journalist and the reflective depth of a philosopher, to set forth the most reasoned and insightful conclusions that the data will support.

Research Ethics

All research at Tyndale Seminary involving interaction with human subjects, where data is systematically collected for a research paper or presentation is subjected to rules governing such research and reviewed by the [Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). However, in class projects like this, a general review by the chair of REB is sufficient, to ensure steps are taken to protect the anonymity of participants, preservation of the confidentiality of the information, and the safe keeping and disposal of the information after the research. Students would be working with the instructor to complete this review by the chair of REB; no research or fieldwork can begin before this is done. With help from your instructor, you should have a clear idea of what project you want to do by Week #4 and develop your proposal by Week #5. This would allow for a good “turn-around” time, so you can begin fieldwork by Week #7.

E. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

F. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

“An exercise”	10 %
Critique of Ethnography	20 %
Breakout Group Discussions	25 %
Major Project & Presentation	45 %
Total Grade	100%

G. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

All assignments will be submitted via Moodle by 11:55PM on the due dates. Late work will be penalized, with the reduction of 1 mark per day, inclusive of Saturdays and Sundays. Late work will be graded but will not receive any comments from the instructor. All assignments will adopt the Turabian/Chicago (footnotes) or APA style (footnotes). Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.44 to 10.48](#) and [14.238 to 14.241](#).

The [APA Style Guide](#) is a helpful web site for all questions regarding APA style.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

H. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

<u>Date/Session</u>	<u>Readings/Assignments</u>
Jan. 12 Course overview & assignments Covenant, community & culture of learning	MSS 2004, chs. 1-3 Siew (2006) ³ ; watch video interview
Jan. 19 Psalm 19 Ethnography: nature & applications Discussion: M 2008, Introduction, ch. 1; Ketelaars (2018)	M 2008, Introduction; ch. 1 Ketelaars (2018)
Jan. 26 An exercise in getting to know ethnographic-qualitative research	MSS 2004, chs. 4-6 Patton (2002), ch. 1
Feb. 2 Joshua 1-2 What's Your Questions? Research Design Discussion: M 2008, chs. 2-3; Siew (2020)	M 2008, chs. 2-3; Siew (2020) Due: Assignment #1
Feb. 9 Matthew 8-9; Phil. 2: 5-11 Doing fieldwork: ground rules for observation Ethics of Pastoral Research Discussion: M 2008, ch. 4	M 2008, ch. 4 MSS 2004, read one ethnography Due: Proposal for Ethics Review
Feb. 16	

³ All articles or book chapters for discussion learning are posted on Moodle. Pre-reading of all discussion material before class is expected.

Family Day (no class) Reading days (Feb. 16-19)	MSS 2004, chs. 7-8 Read one ethnography
Feb. 23 Doing fieldwork: ethnographic interview Researcher role/relationships Discussion: M 2008, ch. 5; Firmin et al. (2019)	M 2008, ch. 5 Firmin et al. (2019)
Mar. 2 Acts 17: 16-34 Doing fieldwork: Rudiments of good field notes Discussion: M 2008, ch. 6; Siew (2013)	Siew (2013) M 2008, ch. 6
Mar. 9 and Mar. 16 Fieldwork ⁴	Transcribe field notes
Mar. 23 Data analysis (bring your transcripts/field notes) Discussion: M 2008, chs. 7-8	MSS 2004, Read 1 ethnography M 2008, ch. 7-8
Mar. 30 Joshua 3-8 Writing the report Research-ministry balance Likert-type instrumentation & generalization of findings Discussion: M 2008, chs. 9-10	M 2008, chs. 9-10 Due: Assignment #2
Apr. 6 Project presentations Review of Learning Journey	Due: Project presentation Due: Assignment #4 (Apr. 12)

V. ONLINE RESOURCES

Ethnographic research is gaining respect in the academic world and you will find many such

⁴ Learning the basic skills of ethnographic research is most effectively acquired when one is engaged in fieldwork, keeping in mind the theoretical principles acquired in readings and class learning. About 25% of class time would be devoted to fieldwork, which means class learning happens in the field. Note these two fieldwork days in the schedule and arrange your interviews accordingly. With Covid-19, all interviews would be done via MS Teams or Zoom.

articles in established journals in education, health and social sciences. You are encouraged to preview some of these listed below in the course of this study.

The Qualitative Report (fully online)

Journal of Ethnographic & Qualitative Research

Practical Matters: A Journal of Religious Practices and Practical Theology (see Issue No.3, "Ethnography and Theology" (March 2010).

Teachers College Record (Journal of Teachers College, Columbia University)

International Journal for Qualitative Studies in Education

Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry

Religious Education (Journal of the Religious Education Association)

Ethnography and Education

Harvard Educational Review

Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion

Review of Religious Research

Sociology of Religion

Acknowledgment

This course is adapted from an ethnographic research course by Ted W. Ward, Professor Emeritus of Education at Michigan State University and Professor Emeritus of Educational Studies and Mission at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago. Prof. Ward, my mentor in the PhD program, first taught me the delightful adventure of living the ethnographic life.

VI. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals](#), [e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

Books

Atkinson, Paul. *Handbook of Ethnography*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 2001.

Baker, Dori Grinenko. Editor. *Greenhouses of Hope*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2010.

Caroll, Jackson W. *God's Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln. Editors. [Handbook of Qualitative Research](#). 3rd Edition. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 2005.

Emerson, Robert M, Rachel I Fretz and Linda L Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Fetterman, David M. [*Ethnography Step by Step*](#). Third edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2010.

Hammersley, Martyn, and Paul Atkinson. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. Third edition. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Hoge, Dean R. and Jacqueline E. Wenger. [*Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005.

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Roberts, Omar M. *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*. Revised edition. University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Scharen, Christian B. and Anna Marie Vigen (Editors). *Ethnography as Christian Theology & Ethics*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011.

Scharen, Christian B. *Explorations in Ecclesiology & Ethnography*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012.

_____. *Fieldwork in Theology: Exploring the Social Context of God's Work in the World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.

Spradley, James P, David W. McCurdy and Dianna Shandy. *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society*. Second edition. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2005.

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Ward, Pete. Editor. *Perspectives on Ecclesiology & Ethnography*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2012.

Articles /Book chapters

Bonini, Nathalie. "The pencil and the shepherd's crook: Ethnography of Masai education," *Ethnography and Education*, v1 n3 (2006), pp. 379-382

Campbell-Reed, Eileen and Christian B. Scaren. "Holy cow! This stuff is real! From imagining ministry to pastoral imagination," *Teaching Theology & Religion*, v14, issue 4 (2011), pp. 323-342

Cha, Peter T. Constructing new intergenerational ties, cultures, and identities among Korean American Christians: A congregational case study. In Robert Priest and Alvaro Nieves, editors, *This Side of Heaven* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 259-273

Firmin, Michael et al. "Religious influences of individuals with cancer in remission," *Journal of Ethnographic & Qualitative Research*, v3 n1 (2008), pp. 13-27

_____. "Draws and drawbacks of an Oxford study abroad experience," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education*, v5 n1 (2016), pp. 18-43

_____. "Qualitative perspectives of homeschool parents regarding perceived educational success," *Journal of Higher Education Theory & Practice*, v19 n1 (2019), pp. 44-55

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