

## EHRD 657

### LIFE HISTORY RESEARCH

**Texas A&M University  
Fall 2005**

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Educational Administration and Human Resource Development  
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Location: College Station: 603 Harrington  
TTVN: San Antonio

Schedule: Thursdays, 5-8 pm

#### Establishing a Safe Classroom Environment



Learning takes place best when a safe environment is established in the classroom. To this end, I will seek to support an environment that nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engaged, honest discussions. I hope that together we create a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable to share and explore ideas. In the course of class discussions, it is quite possible that disagreements will arise. I welcome disagreements in the spirit of critical academic exchange, but please remember to be respectful of other points of view, whether you agree with them or not. In this class, derogatory comments based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or nationality will not be tolerated.

#### ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation for their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Support Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 126 of the Student Services Building. The phone number is (979) 845-1637.

### Statement on Plagiarism

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and represent it as your own. This can be done in several ways:

- Copying material from a published work, such as a book or journal article, and neither indicating it is a direct quote nor attributing it to its author; this also applies to unpublished works.
- Using the ideas of another without attributing those ideas to that person.
- Turning in a paper that someone else has written and claiming it is your own work.

To avoid even the appearance of plagiarism, be careful to paraphrase the ideas of others (i.e., put those ideas into your own words) and provide the proper citation. When quoting directly from a source, use quotation marks and give the citation, including page number. [See the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, for more information on format.]

Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the *Texas A&M University Student Rules*, under the section "Scholastic Dishonesty."

I have, unfortunately, encountered acts of plagiarism in some of my courses. I take plagiarism very seriously. Any student caught plagiarizing will receive an automatic "F" in this class.

### Required Texts:

- Cole, A. L., & Knowles, J. G. (2001). *Lives in context: The art of life history research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Kridel, C. (Ed.). (1998). *Writing educational biography*. New York: Garland.
- Smith, S., & Watson, J. (Eds.) (1996). *Getting a life: Everyday uses of autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Heilbrun, C. G. (1988). *Writing a woman's life*. New York: Ballantine.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The Ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.

Additional readings will be posted on WebCT.

Course Description:

This course examines in depth that type of qualitative research that focuses on life experience both in its entirety (life history; biography and autobiography) and with specificity around a particular event (autoethnography). We will explore the nature of these types of qualitative research and discuss the methodological issues inherent in each mode.

As we will see, the distinctions among these modes of personal research are more blurred than sharp. Our goal over the course of the semester is to construct together a complex understanding of what it means to research the personal.

Course Assignments:

1. Select one of the four genre addressed in this course and develop an annotated bibliography of the more salient methodological literature; journal articles, books, book chapters, dissertation chapters, etc., can be included. Make the annotations substantial (at least one page) so that you engage these ideas in depth. Length: 10-15 pages. Also, identify at least one reading that you believe will be of interest to members of the class. [30% of course grade]
2. Read a student-generated article in a genre other than the one you chose for your annotated bibliography and write a 2-page review/critique in which you put the ideas of the article in conversation with one or more of the course readings. [10% of course grade]
3. Select and read a book in the genre most appropriate for your dissertation research, then write a paper analyzing the book as an example of its genre, using the major ideas discussed in the relevant course readings. Length: 10-15 pages. Present your analysis to the class at the end of the semester. [40% of course grade]

Attendance and active participation in class discussions is also required. [20% of course grade]

Grade Assessment:

- A: 90-100%
- B: 80-89%
- C: 70-79%
- D: 60-69%
- F: <60%

Reading Assignments:

1 September                      Introductions and Course Overview

Behar, R. (1992). A life story to take across the border: Notes on an exchange. In G. Rosenwald & R. Ochberg (Eds.) *Storied lives* (pp. 108-123). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

8 September                      Narrating the Self

Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 651-679). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bruner, J. (2002). The narrative creation of self. In *Making stories: Law, literature, life*. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

Linde, C. (1993). Narrative and the iconicity of the self. In *Life stories: The creation of coherence*. New York: Oxford University Press.

15 September                      Life History

Cole & Knowles: Preface, Beginnings, and Chs. 1-3; and Part 2: Chs. 7-10

Tierney, W. G. (1998). Life history's history: Subjects foretold. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(1), 49-70.

22 September                      Life History

Cole & Knowles: Chs. 4-6; and Part 2: Chs. 11-14

Ginsburg, F. (1993). The case of mistaken identity: Problems in representing women on the Right. In C. B. Brettell, (Ed.), *When they read what we write: The politics of ethnography*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

29 September

Life History

Cole &amp; Knowles: Part 2: Chs. 15-19; Endings

Measor, L., & Sikes, P. (1992). Visiting lives: Ethics and methodology in life history. In I. Goodson (Ed.), *Studying teachers lives* (pp. 209-233). New York: Teachers College Press.

**Due: Life History Annotated Bibliography**

6 October

Biography

Kridel: Introduction; Chs. 1-8

Smith, L. (1994). Biographical method. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The handbook of qualitative research* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.) (pp. 286-305). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

13 October

Biography

Kridel: Chs. 9-17

Brettell, C. B. (1993). Whose history is it? Selection and representation in the creation of a text. In C. B. Brettell, (Ed.), *When they read what we write: The politics of ethnography* (pp. 93-105). Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

20 October

Biography/Autobiography

Kridel: Chs. 18-21; Epilogue; Advice

Smith &amp; Watson: Chs. 1-5

**Due: Biography Annotated Bibliography**

27 October

Autobiography

Smith &amp; Watson: Chs. 6-12

Heilbrun

3 November                      Autobiography

Smith & Watson, Chs. 13-16 and Epilogue

Wiener, W. J., and Rosenwald, G. C. (1993). A moment's monument: The psychology of keeping a diary. In R. Josselson and A. Lieblich (Eds.), *The narrative study of lives*, vol. 1 (pp. 30-58). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Due: Autobiography Annotated Bibliography**

10 November                     Autoethnography

Ellis: Preface through Class Four

17 November                    Autoethnography

Ellis: Class 5 through Class 9

**Due: Autoethnography Annotated Bibliography**

24 November                    Thanksgiving—No Class

1 December                     Autoethnography

Ellis: Class 10 through Author Interlude

8 December                     Presentation of Papers

**Due: Final Paper**