

University of Puerto Rico/Rio Piedras Campus
Faculty of Humanities/English Department/Doctoral Program in English

Ling 6550 Fieldwork in Ghana

Semester: March – May 2018

Professors and Timetable:

Professor: Dr. Nicholas Faraclas and Dr. Dannabang Kuwabong **Offices:** Pedreira basement

Office Hours: Friday from 12-1pm and 6:20-7:30pm and Saturday from 12:20 to 1pm, from 4:20 to 6pm, and by appointment

Telephone: 787-764-0000 ext. (1) 89611

email: nickfaraclas@yahoo.com

Timetable: Section 3401-3U1: Saturday 9:00am -12:20pm

Classroom: TBA

Title, Course Number and Credit Hours: LING 6550 Fieldwork in Ghana (45 Hours/3 Credits)

Prerequisites, Corequisites or Other Requirements: None

Description of the Course:

Even though many of the languages and vernacular traditions of Africa and the Caribbean are in grave danger of being overwhelmed by the European languages that dominate in African and Caribbean governments, schools, media, etc, most remain undocumented. Where documentation does exist, it is often sparse. Opportunities for fieldwork abound, and the goal of this course is to prepare students to do effective fieldwork. It is designed both to fill the considerable gaps in scholarship and to further the continuing efforts of the English department to place the study of Anglophone Afro-Caribbean cultures and languages in a multidisciplinary and global context.

This course has three parts. It begins with a survey of the growing body of academic work that focuses on fieldwork in the current era of globalization, written by specialists from a wide spectrum of fields, including: linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, and postcolonial studies. During this component, students will also survey the scholarly work already done on the language and literature of their target group. The second part takes students to the field in the Anglophone Afro-Caribbean to collect data from native speakers, and introduces them to the techniques and skills necessary to prepare and carry out a fieldwork experience. The third part of the course deals with the linguistic and cultural analysis of the data collected. Emphasis will be put on the responsibilities of fieldworkers to the communities they work in, and ways in which theory can be put into practice in the form of community service.

Objectives of the Course: By the end of the course, the students will be able:

- 1) To convey the intellectual excitement of fieldwork.
- 2) To provide a realistic and relevant picture of the complexities of describing language as it is used by actual speakers in natural settings as well as in less natural ones (i.e., speech labs, sound-proof rooms, formal interviews).

- 3) To understand the importance not merely of the collection of data, in this case data from an English-speaking area of the Afro-Caribbean, as an end in itself but also for: (a) its contribution to the advancement of theory, (b) the understanding of variation across languages and cultures, and (c) its unmasking of the effects of global forces on language and culture.
- 4) To critically analyze the role of the researcher in collecting, interpreting and otherwise using data, especially in a globalized context.
- 5) To develop a research methodology which approaches native speakers as collaborators-‘partners’ and somehow positively contributes to the community being studied in their attempts to come to terms with the current wave of globalization.
- 6) To properly operate equipment used in the recording of oral culture and the collection of speech samples for linguistic analysis.
- 7) To design and administer relevant questionnaires.
- 8) To use the original data or information collected during field-based research in subsequent work.
- 9) To put research into action/practice through community service.
- 10) To contribute in an effective way to the integration of fellow students with special challenges and needs into the learning environment.
- 11) To participate in teamwork designed to make necessary adjustments for the inclusion of students with special challenges and needs.

Outline of the Course (Course Content and Calendar): The course is divided into three parts.

Part I Review of current debates about fieldwork and ethnographic/ linguistic research

Readings: Aceto, Dimmendaal, Everett, Geertz, Hale, Hyme, Milroy and Gordon, Newman and Ratliff, Winford, Wolfson

Students are exposed to debates about fieldwork in a globalized context in anthropology, linguistics and related fields, as well as becoming familiar with the existing research on the language and culture of the target community.

Part II Fieldwork in the English-speaking Afro-Caribbean

Readings: Chelliah, Freeman, Hopkins, Ladefoged, Longacre, Watahomigie and Yamamoto, Craig

Students are engaged in intensive data collection experiences in English-speaking Afro-Caribbean communities. All phases of the fieldwork process are covered, including: identification of a sample population, construction of instruments for data collection, developing a framework for working with collaborators, experimenting with different techniques for the collection of data, transcribing data, and making data accessible for future research.

Part III Cultural and Linguistic Analysis

Readings: Alleyne, Cockcroft et al., Cojti Cuxil, DeGraff, Dixon, Duranti, England, Gil, Hudson, Li, Mithun, Said

Students review traditional methods of analysis, including the comparative method, the historical method, the ethnographic method, and additional methods used by folklorists and other cultural researchers as well as critiques and commentaries on each.

TOTAL: 12 Sessions (45 contact hours)

Teaching Strategies: As much as possible a participatory, student-centered pedagogy will be used in this class, with students actively engaged in learning processes whereby they can use their existing knowledge to shed light on areas of understanding about language which they may not have previously explored, through the use of such methods as discussion, Socratic questioning, group work, fieldwork, active research, lectures, textual analysis, critical analysis of linguistic and cultural analyses, etc. In line with University regulations, there is a possibility of covering up to 11.25 hours of the 45 contact hours for this course with alternative methods.

Resources Required:

- 1) Richardson Seminar Room (English Department) for student research and access to assigned readings

Methods of Evaluation: Evaluation procedures will be adjusted for students with special needs.

Course Participation	20%
1 Fully-described pilot project proposal or grant proposal	30%
1 Research Project or Community Service	50%
TOTAL	100%

Grading System: A=90-100%; B=80-89%; C=70-79%; D=60-69%; F=0-59%
Alternative evaluation systems are available for students with special needs.

Reasonable Accommodation:

Students with access to Vocational Rehabilitation Services should contact the professor at the beginning of the semester in order to plan any special arrangements and equipment necessary in accordance with the recommendations of the Office of Challenged Students' Affairs (OAPI) in the office of the Dean of Students. In addition, any students with special needs or who require any type of assistance or special arrangements should contact the professor.

Academic Integrity

The University of Puerto Rico promotes the highest standards of academic and scientific integrity. Article 6.2 of the UPR Students General Bylaws (Board of Trustees Certification 13, 2009-2010) states that academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: fraudulent actions; obtaining grades or academic degrees by false or fraudulent

simulations; copying the whole or part of the academic work of another person; plagiarizing totally or partially the work of another person; copying all or part of another person's answers to the questions of an oral or written exam; taking or getting someone else to take the exam on his/her behalf; as well as enabling and facilitating another person to perform the aforementioned behavior. Any of these behaviors will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the disciplinary procedure laid down in the UPR Students General Bylaws.

Grading System: A=90-100%; B=80-89%; C=70-79%; D=60-69%; F=0-59%
Alternative evaluation systems are available for students with special needs.

Bibliography:

Primary Text:

Newman, Paul and Ratliff, Martha (eds.). 2001. *Linguistic Fieldwork*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Other Sources:

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<https://linguistics.stanford.edu/research/linguistic-fieldwork/>
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www.ling.udel.edu/pcole/fieldmethods/fieldwork_tools_and_resour.htm
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