

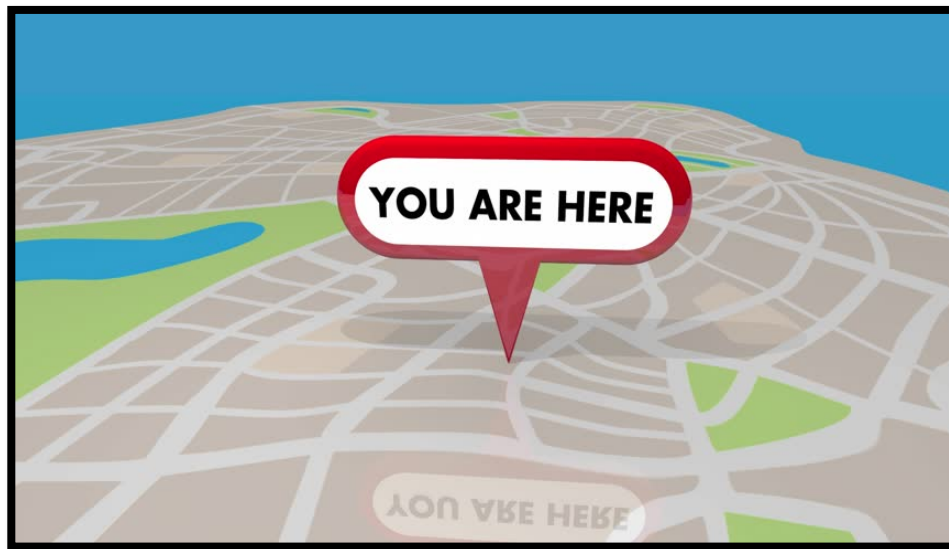
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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY (7001H)  
WINTER TERM 2020

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**INSTITUTIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY**

*Critical Foundations and Contemporary Public Health Applications*



Smith (2005, p. 226) describes the *indexical* nature of maps and how the idea of mapping is analogous in this research tradition: “Institutional Ethnography’s project of mapping institutions always refers back to an actuality that those who are active in it know (the way the phrase *you are here* works on a map).”

**INSTRUCTOR:** Prof. Daniel Grace  
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**SEMINAR TIME** Wednesdays, 2-5pm  
**& LOCATION:** Room: Health Sciences 715  
Appointments: *By Request*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

As a method of inquiry, Institutional ethnography (IE) provides an analytic tool box to help researchers map social relations and explicate how individuals are governed. IE, at its heart, is about working towards a more equitable society and is analytically concerned

with exploring the ways in which power is exerted in practices of ruling. Developed by Canadian feminist scholar Dorothy Smith, this alternative sociology provides a research strategy that allows for an understanding of the socially organized nature of everyday life. IE is committed to discovery and is a highly empirically-driven form of social research which draws principally from primary interview, observational, and text-based data sources. This approach to critical social science focuses on the material actualities of people's lives in order to help develop analytic descriptions of ruling practices.

For the institutional ethnographer, starting investigations with “objective” social or political theories, or notions of a “pristine” Archimedean point, are rejected in favour of beginning with the experiences, events, and concerns of people in the everyday world. Many institutional ethnographies focus upon the “text-mediated” nature of everyday life and seek to reveal how ruling relations are organized or enabled by the production, widespread circulation, and activation of texts. To ground their investigations in people's actual activities, institutional ethnographers have adopted a generous understanding of “work” as that which involves a combination of intention, effort, and a degree of acquired skill or competence.

We begin the course by reading some of the foundational writings of Dorothy Smith on the development of IE. After understanding the social ontology of this critical research strategy, we turn to a discussion of how one may actually go about conducting an institutional ethnographic study. We pay focused attention to the role of interviews and the analysis of texts to investigate ruling relations. We discuss activist ethnography and the ways in which IEs may be put into practice. In our final weeks, we critically discuss how IE may be used along with other theoretical and methodological traditions. Throughout the course we draw on examples of IEs that have been conducted to explore diverse research problematics in and beyond the field of public health.

#### **REQUIRED READING MATERIAL:**

Smith, D. E. (2005). *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. Rowman Altamira.

Campbell, M., and F. Gregor. (2002). *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography*. Aurora, Ontario: Garamond Press.

***Copies of these texts will be made available for purchase at the University of Toronto Bookstore.***

Required readings for each session are listed in this outline. Copies of the required readings are posted on Quercus or will be made available for review prior to class.

**EVALUATION:****A. Facilitations (30%)**

Each week, from weeks 3-10, students will facilitate/co-facilitate a discussion of the assigned readings. Students will facilitate once during the semester. This entails providing: (a) an overview presentation, (b) distributing a short handout based on *critical reflections of the readings* to help frame the subsequent discussion and (c) leading/co-leading class discussion. *Additional information regarding facilitation expectations is posted on Quercus.*

When facilitating class discussion, you will provide focused discussion questions and:

- *Provide opportunities for everyone to speak and contribute*
- *Encourage discussion of varied opinions and perspectives*
- *Help to make connections across contributions*
- *Listen attentively and asked for clarification as required*
- *Manage any conflict or difficulties in a respectful manner*

**B. Presentation (20%)**

In the final 2 weeks of class, students will give a presentation of their final assignment. *Additional information regarding presentation expectations is posted on Quercus.*

**C. Final Paper or Research Proposal (50%)**

The final assignment for this course is a **research paper** in which you use institutional ethnography to explore a health related topic of your choice. This assignment has 2 components: (1) an assignment proposal (10%) due on the 5<sup>th</sup> week of class (2 pages) and (2) a final research paper (40%) due at the end of the term. You have flexibility with how you approach this final assignment depending on your research stage and experience with institutional ethnography. *Additional information regarding expectations for the final assignment is posted on Quercus.*

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**PARTICIPATION:** Successful class sessions rely on the presence of engaged students; thus, your punctual and regular attendance is crucial for your own learning, as well as that of others. Students are expected to contribute to class discussion on a regular basis, to have completed the readings prior to class each week, and to bring notes they have made on the readings to class. If you will be absent, please notify Professor Grace in advance.

**Late work:** Late submission will result in a 5% grade deduction per day. Papers submitted more than three days late will not be accepted. When illness or other special circumstances affect your ability to meet the deadline, notification should be given to Professor Grace as soon as possible and before the deadline in question.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Students in graduate studies are expected to be familiar with the University's policies on academic integrity and commit to the highest standards of academic practice. This includes understanding the importance of protecting and acknowledging intellectual property. Students are expected to know how to cite references appropriately, thereby avoiding plagiarism. Please refer to following documents for guidance:

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Help and information is available on the [Academic Integrity](#) website. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters ([www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm)) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
- Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test.
- Misrepresenting your identity.

In academic work:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

All university policies regarding plagiarism will be upheld in this course.

**ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION:**

The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University's courses and programs. For more information, or to register with Accessibility Services, please visit: <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

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**READINGS**

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**WEEK 1: Introduction****Required Readings:**

DeVault, M. L. (2006). Introduction: What is institutional ethnography. *Soc. Probs.*, 53, 294.

**Recommended Readings:**

Smith, Dorothy E. (2002). Institutional Ethnography. Pp. 17-52. In May. T. (Ed.) *Qualitative Research in Action*. London: Sage.

McCoy, L. (2008). Institutional ethnography and constructionism. Pp. 701-714 in *Handbook of constructionist research*.

**WEEK 2: Women's Standpoint, Knowing the Social, and Designing an Ontology for Institutional Ethnography****Required Readings:**

Smith, Dorothy E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people*. Rowman Altamira. [Forward, Introduction and Chapters 1-3]

**Recommended Readings:**

Smith, Dorothy E. (1990). "The Ideological Practice of Sociology." Pp. 31-57 in D. E. Smith, *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*. Northeastern University Press.

Smith, Dorothy E. (1978). 'K is mentally ill' the anatomy of a factual account. *Sociology*, 12(1), 23-53.

Bisaillon, L. (2012). An analytic glossary to social inquiry using institutional and political activist ethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(5), 607-627.

McGibbon, E., Peter, E., & Gallop, R. (2010). An institutional ethnography of nurses' stress. *Qualitative Health Research*, 20(10), 1353-1378.

**WEEK 3: Language as Coordinating Subjectivities and Making Institutions Ethnographically Accessible****Required Readings:**

Smith, Dorothy E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people*. Rowman Altamira. [Chapters 4-6]

Dale, C.M., Angus, J.E., Sinuff, T., & Rose, L. (2016). Ethnographic investigation of oral care in the intensive care unit. *American Journal of Critical Care*, 25(3), 249-256.

**Recommended Readings:**

- Smith, G.W. and D.E Smith. (1998). "The Ideology of 'Fag.'" *The Sociological Quarterly* 39(2): 309-335.
- Carroll, W.K. 2010. "'You Are Here': An Interview With Dorothy E. Smith." *Socialist Studies/Études Socialistes* 6(2): 9-37.

#### **WEEK 4: Seeing Social Organization and Beginning an Institutional Ethnography**

##### ***Required Readings:***

- Campbell, M., & Gregor, F. (2002). *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography*. University of Toronto Press. [Introduction and Chapters 1-3].
- Sinding, C. (2010). Using institutional ethnography to understand the production of health care disparities. *Qualitative Health Research*, 20(12), 1656-1663.

##### ***Recommended Readings:***

- Rankin, J. (2017). Conducting Analysis in Institutional Ethnography: Analytical Work Prior to Commencing Data Collection. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1609406917734484.
- Smith, D. (1999). "The Standard North American Family: SNAF as an Ideological Code." In D. E. Smith, *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations*. University of Toronto Press.
- Webster, F., Bhattacharyya, O., Davis, A., Glazier, R., Katz, J., Krueger, P., ... & Wilson, L. (2015). An institutional ethnography of chronic pain management in family medicine (COPE) study protocol. *BMC health services research*, 15(1), 494.

#### **WEEK 5: Collecting Data and Using Interviews to Investigate Ruling Relations**

##### ***Required Readings:***

- Campbell, M., & Gregor, F. (2002). Collecting Data for an Institutional Ethnography. Pp. 59-82 in *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography*. University of Toronto Press.
- Devault, Marjorie and McCoy, Liza. (2004). Institutional ethnography: Using interviews to investigate ruling relations. P. 751-776 in Gubrium, Jaber, F. and Holstein, James, A. (Eds.). *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- McCoy, L. (2006). Keeping the Institution in View: Working with Interview Accounts of Everyday Experience. Pp. 109-125 in Smith, D. (ed). *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*.

##### ***Recommended Readings:***

- Devault, Marjorie. (1990). Talking and listening from women's standpoint. Feminist strategies for interviewing and analysis. *Social Problems* 37(1): 96-116.
- Grace, D. (2013). Transnational institutional ethnography: Tracing text and talk beyond state boundaries. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12(1), 587-605.

**WEEK 6: Analyzing Texts and Textual Processes*****Required Readings:***

- Smith, D.E. (1990). Textually Mediated Social Organization. Chapter 7 in *Texts, Facts, and Femininity*. 209-225. Routledge.
- Rankin, J., & Campbell, M. (2014). "Three in a Bed": Nurses and Technologies of Bed Utilization in a Hospital. In Smith, D. & Turner, S. (Eds.), Pp. 147-170 in *Incorporating Texts into Institutional Ethnographies*. University of Toronto Press.
- Grace, D. (2015). Criminalizing HIV transmission using model law: troubling best practice standardizations in the global HIV/AIDS response. *Critical Public Health*, 25(4), 441-454.

***Recommended Readings:***

- Pence, E. (2001). Safety for battered women in a textually mediated legal system. *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies*, 7(2), 199-229.
- Smith G.W. (1988). Policing the gay community: an inquiry into textually-mediated social relations. *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 6(2):163-83.
- Smith, D. E., & Turner, S. M. (Eds.). (2014). *Incorporating texts into institutional ethnographies*. University of Toronto Press.

**WEEK 7: Work, Texts, and Mapping Institutions*****Required Readings:***

- Turner, S. M. (2006). Mapping institutions as work and texts. Pp. 139-161 in *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*. Smith, D. E., Rowman Altamira.
- Grace, D., Egan, M., & Lock, K. (2016). Examining local processes when applying a cumulative impact policy to address harms of alcohol outlet density. *Health & place*, 40, 76-82.
- Campbell, M., & Gregor, F. (2002). Analyzing Data in Institutional Ethnography. Pp. 83-102 in *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography*. University of Toronto Press.

***Recommended Readings:***

- Rankin, J. (2017). Conducting Analysis in Institutional Ethnography: Guidance and Cautions. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1609406917734472.
- Smith, Dorothy E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people*. Rowman Altamira. [Chapter 7].
- Rankin, Janet M. and Marie L Campbell. (2006). *Managing to Nurse: Inside Canada's Health Care Reform*. University of Toronto Press.
- Braaf, S., Manias, E., & Riley, R. (2013). The 'time-out' procedure: an institutional ethnography of how it is conducted in actual clinical practice. *BMJ Qual Saf*, bmjqs-2012.

## **WEEK 8: Contributions of IE to HIV/AIDS Research and the Conceptualization of Healthwork**

### ***Required Readings:***

- Mykhalovskiy, E. (2008). Beyond decision-making: Class, community organizations and the healthwork of people living with HIV/AIDS. Contributions from institutional ethnographic research. *Medical Anthropology: Cross Cultural Studies in Health and Illness*, 27(2), 136-63.
- McCoy, L. (2005). "HIV-positive patients and the doctor-patient relationship: perspectives from the margins." *Qualitative Health Research* 15(6): 791-806.
- Grace, D. (2019). Institutional Ethnography as a Critical Research Strategy: Access, Engagement, and Implications for HIV/AIDS Research. In *Social Science and HIV/AIDS: Critique, Research, and Engagement*. Editors Viviane Namaste and Eric Mykhalovskiy).

### ***Recommended Readings:***

- Bresalier, M., L. Gillis, C. McClure, L. McCoy, E. Mykhalovskiy, D. Taylor, M. Webber. 2002. *Making Care Visible: Antiretroviral Therapy and the Health Work of People Living with HIV/AIDS*. Making Care Visible Working Group.
- Muñoz-Laboy, M.A., L. Murray, N. Wittlin, J. Garcia, V. Terto Jr, and R.G. Parker. (2011). "Beyond Faith-Based Organizations: Using Comparative Institutional Ethnography to Understand Religious Responses to HIV and AIDS in Brazil." *American Journal of Public Health* 101(6): 972-978.
- Mykhalovskiy, E., L. McCoy, and M. Bresalier. 2004. "Compliance/Adherence, HIV/AIDS and the Critique of Medical Power." *Social Theory and Health*. 2(4): 315-340.
- Mykhalovskiy, E., and G.W. Smith. 1994. *Getting 'Hooked Up': A Report On the Barriers People Living with HIV/AIDS Face Accessing Social Services*. Prepared for National Welfare Grants, Health Canada, Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

## **WEEK 9: Activism and Institutional Ethnography in Practice**

### ***Required Readings:***

- Smith, G. W. (1990). Political activist as ethnographer. *Social Problems*, 37(4), 629-648.
- Mykhalovskiy, E. and K. Church. (2006). Of T-Shirts and Ontologies: Celebrating George Smith's Pedagogical Legacies. Pp. 71-86 in *Sociology for Changing the World: Social Movements/Social Research*, eds. C. Frampton, F. Kinsman, A. Thompson, and K. Tilleczeck, Halifax: Fernwood Press.
- Carroll, W. K. (2006). Marx's method and the contributions of institutional ethnography. Pp. 232-245 in *Sociology for Changing the World: Social Movements/Social Research*, eds. C. Frampton, F. Kinsman, A. Thompson, and K. Tilleczeck, 71-86. Halifax: Fernwood Press.



***Recommended Readings:***

Campbell, M., & Gregor, F. (2002). Putting Institutional Ethnography into Practice. In *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography* (pp. 103-128). University of Toronto Press.

**WEEK 10: Institutional Ethnography and Connections to Other Research Traditions**

***Required Readings:***

*\*Final list of required readings to be determined based on student interest in related methods and theories\**

Teghtsoonian, K. (2016). Methods, discourse, activism: comparing institutional ethnography and governmentality. *Critical Policy Studies*, 10(3), 330-347.

***Recommended Readings:***

Campbell, M. L. (2016). Intersectionality, Policy-Oriented Research and the Social Relations of Knowing. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(3), 248-260.

Walby, K. (2007). "On the Social Relations of Research: A Critical Assessment of Institutional Ethnography." *Qualitative Inquiry* 13(7), 1008-1030.

**WEEK 11: Student Presentations**

Readings: TBD

**WEEK 12: Student Presentations**

Readings: TBD

**This course is part of CQ's Essentials of Qualitative Research curriculum.**

CQ is an extra-departmental unit in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health also supported by the Faculties of Kinesiology and Physical Education, Nursing, Pharmacy, Social Work, and the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute. CQ builds capacity in the health sciences to advance critical and theoretically informed qualitative inquiry. As a hub for researchers, graduate students, and professors teaching qualitative methodology, its academic fellows promote research that addresses the socio-political dimensions of health and questions prevailing assumptions that naturalize health, for example, as individual and biological phenomena.

Visit the CQ website [www.ccqhr.utoronto.ca](http://www.ccqhr.utoronto.ca) to learn more about CQ's resources and activities, which include the Essentials of Qualitative Research (EQR) Course Series and Certificate in Advanced Training in Qualitative Health Research Methodology for PhD students, the Joan Eakin Award for Methodological Excellence in a Qualitative Doctoral Dissertation, and the At the Centre Speaker Series (3-4 seminars per term).



**Acknowledgment of Territory**

We would like to acknowledge that the sacred land that University of Toronto operates on has been a site of human activity for thousands of years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, Toronto is also the home to Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and learn on this important traditional territory